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AN EXPOSITION
OF
JUDE'S EPISTLE OF APOSTACY.

✓
BY REV. D. ROUND,



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PREFACE.

THE Epistle of Jude may be fitly called the Epistle of Apostacy, as it contains so much on the subject. It brings before us the apostacy of the children of Israel in the wilderness; the apostacy of Sodom and Gomorrah from all natural religion; the apostacy of angels from their first estate. These facts are sufficient to show in what apostacy consists, viz.: in departure from the place the grace of God gives to angels or men. Apostacy in its strict meaning can only apply to those who have known the truth and wilfully departed from it. A heathen cannot be said to apostatize; a Christian may. Very early in the history of the Church apostacy soon began to reveal itself. The seeds were sown within the pale of the Church in the days of the apostles. Hence the apostles in their later epistles sought to forewarn and arm the faithful against those who were teaching and propagating what was pernicious and corrupting to faith and practice. Jude speaks distinctly of "certain men, leaders in apostacy, who had crept in privately, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Thus, alas, the very bosom of the Church became the seed-bed of various errors and corruptions. The outcome of the seed sown may be traced in one form or other, and in greater or less degree through the history of the Church. No revival, or reformation

has succeeded in rooting up the tares within the limits of a professed Christianity.

What shall we say, rather, what does our Lord and His chosen and inspired servants say, of the character and close of this dispensation? It is from them, and not from the hopeful optimist, or desponding pessimist, we learn its character and end. In the light of their prophetic utterances we discern many of the features of apostacy in the present day, under the prevailing guise of Christianity. "The falling away" was not unforeseen by Christ, "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" We conceive the lack of faith implied in this question will not arise from the fewness, so much as from the degeneracy and apostacy of Christian professors, so that they who bear the name of Christ will practically revolt from the faith. The apostacy of the latter times is foretold in the plainest language by St. Paul. In writing to his son Timothy, he says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (definitely) that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. iv. 1). There were among the Thesalonians persons who were troubled, and disturbing others with the notion that the day of the Lord was actually, or virtually, present. To quiet and silence such, the apostle specifies certain precursors of that day. "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except the apostacy come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." "Remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things." He informs them that the mystery of iniquity *was even then* working. Only there is now a restraining power, keeping it in check for a certain time. But the moment the τὸ κατεχόν or "letting power" is taken out of the way, the

mystery of iniquity comes into full and unrestrained operation. The floodgates of lawlessness will be opened, and the state of society will speedily become utterly disorganized. Such is the vista of the future as given in Scripture. The mystery of iniquity is at work everywhere in Christendom, and will continue to work, till at last, when the restraint is gone, it will issue in the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who will dare to take the place of God in the temple of God.

The conclusion to which we are conducted is that a crisis in Christendom is hastening and at hand. The present dispensational period of grace will soon be completed. Let us not close our eyes to the fearful signs of these times, nor to the lessons they teach. Troubles are thickening around us; scepticism and godlessness are openly avowed. Men blinded by the spirit of infatuation, in this and other so-called Christian lands, are ready when occasion offers to cast off all restraint, to reject all law, rule, and government; and thus to prepare the way for the reign of the "lawless one," "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

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JUDE'S EPISTLE OF APOSTACY.

EXPOSITION I.

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—JUDE 1-3.

JUDAS, the traitor, is called the son of perdition; Judas, the author of this Epistle, is known as the son of Alpheus, and one of our Lord's kindred (Matt. xiii. 55). But though closely related to the Lord, he styles himself “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” He neither calls himself an apostle, nor the Lord's brother. He contents himself with the humble, though truly honourable title, “Servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Probably he names his relation to James, because, as an apostle, he was better known than himself, and was held in high estimation and reputation in the Church; he was famous for his sanctity of life, and accounted a pillar in the Church of Christ. Jude, therefore, by speaking of himself as a brother of James, might thereby win attention and credit to his Epistle from those to whom he wrote. This Epistle is of special interest and importance in our times. No writer in the New Testament wrote so little as Jude, but a full expansion of the various points he introduces into this brief letter would fill volumes. We shall not enter into a minute and critical analysis of its contents, but endeavour to give a few thoughts on what is said in this little Epistle of the beginning and end of Christian apostacy.

THE CHARACTERS ADDRESSED.

We see in the first verse to whom the Apostle is writing. It is not to any one Church, or local assembly, it is to Christians at large, and even every individual Christian wherever he may be: "to them that are sanctified by God the Father¹ and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." "Sanctified by God the Father." What words are these! What words for the heart of faith! What marvellous grace on the part of God! What is it to be thus sanctified?—some may inquire. It is to be set apart for a holy use—to be separated from the world, from guilt and pollution, and to be brought into a state of holiness. The author of this sanctification is God the Father. It is God that justifieth; no less is it God that sanctifieth. He gave His Son to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people. He cleanses and purifies all that believe in Jesus. He sanctifies through belief of the truth. Hence the prayer addressed to God as the sanctifier of his saints, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." "Preserved in Jesus Christ." The sanctified are the preserved in Jesus—they are every way secure against the temptations of an evil world, and the many false teachers employed by the devil as instruments to mislead and ruin unstable souls. This security realised by those who are in Christ is an answer to the prayer of the blessed Lord, in John xvii. 11: "Holy Father, keep through Thy own name those whom Thou hast given Me." The fidelity of God is pledged to keep them. He is not only able but faithful to preserve them to the end. None are safe, but such as are in Christ. They are kept and preserved in Him.

Having our lot cast in an evil time, when soul-destroying errors abound, and when false teachers of every kind mislead so many, what a comfort to be able to realise the blessed state of the sanctified and preserved ones! Am I

¹ We have kept to the A.V.; at the same time, we *receive* the R.V., "Beloved in God the Father," as the right reading of the Greek text.

among the happy number of those who are sanctified and preserved *in* Jesus Christ? Oh, blessed condition; to be in Christ Jesus, is to be free from every fear, to be safe from every enemy, to be quiet and confident, though a thousand dangers surround us!

THE INVOCATION.

But while Jude congratulates the persons he addresses as the sanctified, preserved, and called, he prays to God on their behalf, that mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied. The blessings invoked come from God through Christ. They have their source in Him, and flow from Him as from an inexhaustible fountain. 1st. *The mercy of God is invoked.*—“Mercy unto you.” Though pardoned and spoken of as sanctified, they still needed mercy; the holiest of men need God’s mercy. While in the world, encompassed with infirmities, and passing through conflicts, they will need the tender mercy of God. They will need it in all the crises of life, and in the great day of the Lord the need of this mercy remains. Hence, the Apostle prays for mercy—multiplied mercy—mercy in its manifold aspects. May you daily and hourly experience afresh the sweetness of God’s mercy! 2nd. *The invocation includes peace.* These Christians had peace—peace as the fruit of grace, peace in the conscience, the peace of God, the peace of a spiritual mind. Jude invokes an increase of it.

“PEACE BE MULTIPLIED.”

May it abound more and more; may the peace of God keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ. May the Lord of peace give you peace always, and by all means! 3rd. *The third grace invoked is love.* They had a measure of it in possession. It came from God through Christ, and was shed abroad in their renewed nature by the Holy Ghost. And as it came from God, it is the same in kind as the love of God. It is pure, free from selfishness, disinterested; it extends to enemies as well as to friends. It is patient and

hopeful: it beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things. It makes us Godlike, "For God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). How precious to us is the thought that we are capable of receiving and exercising a love like God's! But this Divine love admits of increase. Jude prayed for it. Love be multiplied, which means a further degree of augmentation—more love to God, and more love to one another. But how is it to be increased? Well, the more we know of Divine truth, the more will this love multiply; the more we exercise it, the more it will strengthen. "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment" (Phil. i. 9); Jude saw there was room for an increase of the triune graces, and therefore prayed, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

THE EXHORTATION NEEDED.

The exhortation of Jude now claims our attention. It was evidently his original intention to write to the beloved brethren of the common salvation. This would have been his far more delightful task. It would have been his joy and his refreshment to expatiate upon the present privileges and future glories, wrapped up in the comprehensive folds of that precious word, "salvation." But he felt it needful to turn from this more congenial work, in order to fortify their souls against the rising tide of error and evil, which threatened the very foundations of Christianity. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The faith to be contended for, is simply, "the word of the truth of the Gospel"—the Gospel which the apostles received and were commissioned to preach. It is designated the faith because it is "the word to be believed." We read of Bar-Jesus, a sorcerer and false prophet, who "sought to

turn away the deputy from the faith." "A great company of priests were obedient to the faith." "He now preached the faith which before he destroyed." The Gospel is fitly called the faith, as it reveals the doctrines of faith—the truths to be believed to salvation ; and more particularly the doctrine of faith in Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer. The Gospel of the Cross is the power of God unto

SALVATION TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH.

Observe, it is *the only Divinely-given faith*. It was first received by inspired men from the Lord, and delivered by them to the saints—the first deliverance is the *final* one. It will never give place to something higher and holier than itself. It will never be repeated, nor superseded by another Gospel. We expect no new faith, no advanced Gospel, as it is called. We are not to add to, or take from, the faith given. It is complete, it is sufficient. It *was once for all* delivered unto the saints (see Revised Version). We have in the faith a rich treasure—a precious deposit to guard.

The call to contend for the faith suggests *danger*. It would be unnecessary for the inspired writer to press upon us the duty of contending for the faith, if it were not assailed. It has enemies. As in Jude's day, so now all that is vital is at stake ;

FALSE TEACHERS WOULD ROB US

of the faith, or lead us away from it. Teachings subversive of the Christian faith abound. There are numbers who seek to depreciate it, to pervert it, and to change it. Many are openly opposed to the faith and reject its communications. It is, therefore, our duty to contend, not for favourite notions, theories, or systems, but for the faith of the Gospel. It behoves us to stir one another up to faithfulness and zeal—to strenuous effort against sin and error, with the holy resolve to maintain the essential verities of the faith of Christ. There must be no truce with error ; no compromise with the enemies of the Gospel. They must be met,

resisted, and overcome ; not indeed by violence, or railing, or force ; not by penal statutes or any form of persecution ; but by Christian love, and by the plain word of God—the positive truth of Scripture. This faith is

WORTH PRESERVING AT ANY COST.

The apostles thought so, the martyrs thought so, the reformers thought so. They considered the faith to be their life, and were willing to suffer and die for it. Some of us have been saved by Gospel truths, and these truths are dear to us, and we desire that our children's children may possess them as their heritage. The faith is committed to our trust ; let us hold fast its doctrines, value its principles, practise its precepts, and reject all sentiments and opinions not in harmony with its teachings and its requirements.

“Should all the forms which men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art ;
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”

Ministers are set for the defence and confirmation of the faith. Deacons of churches are charged by St. Paul to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Christians everywhere are enjoined to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” May the Lord give to us courage “earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints,” that when brought to the close of life we may be able with Paul to say, “I have kept the faith.”

EXPOSITION II.

The necessity for the exhortation to be vigilant in preserving the faith.—Read from the 4th to the 9th verse.

THE reason for this watchfulness and vigilance is given in words of warning, ver. 4: “*For* there are certain men crept in unawares.” The Apostle probably knew who they were, but forbears to give their names. He describes their entrance—they crept in stealthily, or by specious pretences, and when in the Church they began to sow their bad seed. They preached in a deceitful way doctrines of liberty. They sought by words and phrases to clear the way for the full indulgence of the will, to set it free from everything that restrained it. As a covering of their grossest guilt they ask, “Are we not as God made us?” “Are not our lips our own?” They claimed the right to act, to think, and to speak as they please. They turned the pure and precious grace of our God into lasciviousness, denying both by their words and works “our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

“Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men.” The word translated ordained, signifies prescribed, or written beforehand in the Scriptures concerning these men and their condemnation. The infinite mind of God knows all, and notes down beforehand all that in the process of time takes place against the day of judgment.

EXAMPLES OF APOSTACY.

The Apostle proceeds to cite several examples of apostacy as warnings to us, ver. 5: “I will therefore put you in remembrance.” The Apostle felt it to be his duty to recall to their mind historical facts formerly understood, yet possibly

almost forgotten, or at least for the present not duly considered or remembered. It is also our duty as ministers to put you in mind of things that are past. The memories of the best of Christians are frail, and need to be stirred up again and again by way of remembrance. The Apostle recalls to our memory three cases of apostacy.

(1.) *The exodus and failure of Israel.* "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved His people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." The evil of unbelief was the root of their apostacy, their downfall and their judgment. These things happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." You are like Israel redeemed out of Egypt. You, as they were, have been delivered by the blood of the Lamb. You have made a profession of faith in Jesus. You are a recognised member of a Christian church. You know the grace of God in truth. Take heed, lest by unbelief you depart from the living God. The fearful fact is here brought before you, that the people ransomed out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. They provoked God by their unbelief, and died under His frown of anger. They fell without obtaining the hope set before them. It is possible for you to fall from grace, to lose your hope of heaven, and to be lost for ever.

(2.) *The second case is the apostacy of angels and their punishment.* "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," ver. 6. "They kept not their first estate." It is quite clear that angels, like men, were created in a probationary state, and in the beginning, like men, holy and happy. But they "kept not their first estate," that is, they preserved not their original position and dignity in the order of created beings, which they might have done by obeying God's com-

mands. They apostatized, they voluntarily departed from the position in which God had placed them. They "left their own habitation" of light and purity, and in consequence of their rebellion are reserved in "everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

The doom of these apostate angels is fearful. It is expressed without any prospect of a change, any hope of a reprieve, and will be eternal in its duration. What an appalling destiny is awaiting them! They are kept prisoners under darkness unto the judgment of the great day—what a judgment that will be—final, unalterable, indescribable.

The design of St. Jude in making known the fall and doom of these celestial beings must be kept in mind. It is to warn and admonish us. May it also *humble!* If such beings fell, so may we. It is possible for us to become discontented with our "estate" as believers, and to wilfully rebel against God. Remember that sin in us is essentially the same as sin in angels, and will be equally punished. Let us keep this warning in mind and be uniformly humble. Let us guard against every tendency to pride and discontent, lest we fall into the darkness these fallen angels experience.

(3.) *The sin and doom of Sodom and Gomorrah.* "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner with these (the angels), giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange (another) flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," ver. 7. Here is a description of the apostacy of Sodom and Gomorrah from all natural religion, giving themselves to practices contrary even to fallen nature. Their vices were coarse, their sensuality excessive; they wallowed in scenes of pollution, and their conversation in social circles was filthy. The cry of their iniquities and abominations went up to heaven. What was the answer to the cry? We see the answer in the blue rain of burning sulphur from the Lord out of heaven. We see it in the ruin and perpetual desolation of these cities. As we stand on the shore of that gloomy lake called the "Dead Sea," and look around, we

ask, Where is Sodom? Where is Gomorrah? Where are the cities of the plain—those cities once so flourishing and prosperous? Where are they now? They are gone for ever! Swept away by the judgments of God, consumed by the fire of His wrath. Oh, what a warning is thus given to sinners of the doom of their sins. There are, believe me, greater offenders in the sight of God, than even the men of Sodom, and consequently a more fearful judgment awaits them. The men of Capernaum, who beheld and rejected the *light* of the world, will meet with a deeper, darker doom than the unclean sinners of the plain who are said to be “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Matt. xi. 23). And why? Not because they were guilty of grosser sin than Sodom, but because they refused to listen to the voice of heavenly wisdom; they believed not in Jesus, though most of His mighty works had been done among them. Theirs was the deeper, darker sin of unbelief. What Christ said of the men of Capernaum, may be said of men of this nation—of men in every town and city in Christendom. Is it not true that we have light Sodom never had—religious advantages Capernaum never enjoyed? Is not this nation favoured above many? What then will be the guilt of those who rebel against the light, who will not hear the Gospel, will not come to Christ, will not accept the proffered mercy. We cannot measure their guilt before God. What will be their doom? We tremble to think of it. It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment day, than for men in England who have heard Christ's Gospel, and received it not. They shall be punished according to the measure of their guilt. The doom of Sodom is set forth as a beacon to warn: take heed to it ere it be too late.

Thus we have three heart-stirring examples of apostacy, and their fearful doom expressly stated, which ought to deter us from all approaches to apostacy, and to preserve us from forsaking the old paths of belief. In the eighth verse the writer again alludes to “certain men,” the same persons

previously named in ver. 4, and gives a threefold description of their real character as apostates. "Likewise also *these* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

(1.) *These dreamers are charged with defiling the flesh.* They defiled themselves by fornication, as the people of Sodom had done before them. They are filthy dreamers, who spend their life in fulfilling their carnal lusts, and are a curse to themselves, and to all with whom they have intercourse. Men of corrupt minds, vile affections in whom there is no truth.

(2.) *They despise dominion.* The desire of their heart is to be independent of rule and rulers, and to live without restraint in the practice of their evil deeds. In the days of the apostles they were known under the name of Simonians and Nicolaitanes. There have been a series of such men in every age of the Church. They acknowledge no authority, either in church or in state, and wish to live as they list. Are not these characters abounding in our days in all so-called Christian countries?

(3.) *They speak evil of dignities.* They have no reverence for the powers that be. They treat both governors and government with contempt, and calumniate and misrepresent Divine and civil institutions, sovereigns and princes, ministers of state, magistrates, and almost all human dignities are exposed to ridicule and made the butt of satire. These are features of the apostacy common in our day. Against these, and such like persons, we have need to be on our guard, lest we should be seduced by them.

To show these men, who are prone to speak evil of dignities, their daring wickedness, and to make them, if possible, sensible of it, their attention is directed to the conduct of Michael the archangel towards the devil himself: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee," ver. 9. Michael appears to be the chief of the holy

angels, but nevertheless a created being. In this passage he is represented as contending with the devil about the body of Moses. "There is reason to believe that Moses is not dead. He did indeed 'die in the mount,' according to the command of God; but he was seen alive in the days of the Saviour on the mount of transfiguration 'in glory,' and hence in resurrection life. He must, therefore, have been raised again from the state of death; raised in advance of the general resurrection of the saints, as Enoch and Elijah were translated before the general translation of God's waiting and watching ones at the coming of the Lord. And if we are at all warranted in this belief, the dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil 'about the body of Moses' was a contention about the resurrection, the one standing up for the recovery of that body from death, and the other resisting."¹ Moses, by reason of the error at Meribah, had been doomed to die before the Israelites entered Canaan. Satan had then "the power of death" (Heb. ii. 14), and would contend on several grounds against Moses being raised. Michael, however, did not bring a railing accusation against him; he had no disposition to do so; whatever insults he received, his only reply was, "The Lord rebuke thee." The argument then is, that if the highest angel felt it not proper to pass judgment upon Satan, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee!" how dare these sinful men "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" ordained by God.

The *vileness* of the apostate spirit adds strength to the argument. Michael might have imputed evil to his opponent without giving utterance to slander; he might have used reproachful language, and accused him in the strongest terms of all manner of evil, and that justly; but no, he had no disposition to rail, to accuse; and does not the conduct of Michael show that however bad a person may be, it does not justify a railing accusation against him? We are forbidden to revile. "Thou shalt not revile the gods (judges),

¹ Seiss on Revelation, vol. ii. p. 354.

nor curse the rulers of thy people" (Ex. xxii. 28). No reviler can enter the kingdom of heaven. If angels who excel in power and might, rail not, but appeal to the judgment of God; if Jesus our pattern, when reviled, reviled not again, but committed himself to God who judgeth righteously, then let us avoid evil speaking. Speak evil of no man. Let us not rail against men in authority, even supposing them in some things to behave amiss. "He that refraineth his lips is wise." The spirit of lawlessness is confessedly active in the present day, sapping the foundation of civil society. Ministers of state, judges, and magistrates, whom we are taught to respect and venerate, are caricatured and reviled. Men are not afraid to "speak evil of dignities."

Let us learn to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter ii. 13, 14; Titus iii. 1, 2; Rom. xiii. 1-3).

EXPOSITION III.

Types of the men whom Jude describes by the use of many strong similitudes.

“Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear ; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds ; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”—Verses 11-13.

THE reader's attention is now directed to the third portion of this Epistle. May the Lord enable us to rightly expound it. The eleventh verse gives us the types of the various forms of evil and apostacy that appeared in Jude's time, and that will be more fully brought out in the last days. The types are Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Their ways were bad, attended with misery, and ended in woe. There are other types of the many dark and terrible forms of departure from the truth and ways of God, but our thoughts at present must be restricted to the three prominently brought before us in this passage.

(1.) *The way of Cain.* What is it? It may be traced in the sacred record and explained in few words. Cain claimed to be a religious man, and a worshipper of God. He brought a fruit offering to Jehovah in the act of worship ; but he was not accepted. There was no acknowledgment in his offering of his condition as a sinner. There was no confession of sin ; he supposed himself to be all right, and could not see why he should not be accepted. The Lord reasoned with him, and kindly counselled him to bring a right offering. He was assured that there was acceptance for him ; that if he brought the sin-offering like his brother,

he too would yet enjoy the Divine favour. The Lord in effect brought him to this question—Wilt thou take My way, or thine own? That was the point he had to consider, and on which he had to decide. If thou wilt take My way, then even yet all will be well. The appeal was made in vain. Kind words failed. He would not hearken to God's voice, but take his own way. That way began in unbelief in rejecting God's method of salvation through the shedding of blood. This act of rejecting God's method of acceptance determined his subsequent course. He breaks his allegiance from God, and deliberately "went out from the presence of the Lord." All intercourse with God is now foreclosed. He says in effect—"I have done with God, I do not want to say anything more to Him. I want to live without reference to Him. I wish to act as I please, to run in my own paths, and after my own desires! God shall have nothing to do with me, and I will have nothing to do with Him." This was Cain's way. We cannot conceive of anything worse than this. He lived without God.

Cain now goes his *own* way, does what is right in his own eyes, and what in his view is most conducive to his own enjoyment without God. He soon began to build a city or "fort," in defence of himself and the partner of his exile, and called it by the name of his first-born Enoch, which means "dedicated." He dedicated his child to the world, and the city which he built was a memorial of the dedication. He was a man of the world, and had nothing but this world to live for. The world was his all, and he resolved to make the best of it. He seeks in the midst of his family to gather around sources of interest and luxury, and tries to blot out the results of the curse, and to live an easy, prosperous life in forgetfulness of God.

The "way of Cain" still exists. It has not been ploughed up so as to become imperceptible. It is still visible, and never perhaps so popular as in the present day. There are a large class of men who neither deny the existence of God, nor refuse to worship Him. They claim to be religious,

they put themselves down as a part of the religious world, but who, like Cain, refuse to confess that they are sinners. They will not allow that they need the blood of atonement as the ground of their confidence. In their pride and self-sufficiency, they ignore the truth that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, no approach to God, no acceptable worship. Their religion is fashionable, and suits this refined and intellectual age. They leave the past, and get rid of the trammels of old creeds, and the brutalizing influence of altars besmeared with blood. If ever a qualm of conscience does arise through the memory of the past, they strangle it at once by some new mode of dissipation. They seek their pleasures away from God. They set themselves to live for the present, spending their energies to make this world an agreeable and pleasant place of residence.

Will this Cain-religion, which rejects the blood of the Cross, lead men to love, and gentleness, and brotherly kindness? Will a religion which trusts in no blood make a happy people, and bring in the reign of peace and gladness? So say its exulting votaries. So say the teachers of the philosophic theology of the period. So say the poets of the age. Look at the type which is here held up as a standing beacon to warn. Cain rejected the expiatory blood, turning away from the "religion of the shambles" to the mild gentleness of a worship in which no life is taken, and no blood was spilt, and no suffering inflicted. Did this mild and genial religion of his lead to a loving gentle life? No. He who had so many scruples about shedding the blood of an innocent lamb, has none about taking the life of a holy unoffending brother. He who is too pure and refined in his ideas of religion to profane his altar by turning it into "shambles," is all the while busied in preparing shambles of his own, where, for the gratification of malice, hatred, envy, and revenge, and every hellish passion, he may with his own hand butcher a brother for being more righteous than he.

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of

Cain." The way of Cain is the straight way to remediless misery ; there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death. Oh, reader, pause for a moment. Ask yourself the question, Am I going on in Cain's way? And if your eyes are opened to discern the bitter end, return, I pray you, unto the Lord, rely for acceptance on the blood of atonement ere it be too late.

Let us now turn from Cain and his way, to consider —

(2.) *The error of Balaam.* They "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." What was that error? We may learn in what it consisted from the history Moses gives of Balaam in Numb. xxii. It is very clear from the history that Balaam was a man that wanted to serve God, and at the same time suit his own covetousness. He wished to please God, whom he feared, and to please himself too. He tried to persuade himself that this could be done. This was his great error and sin. He was once a true prophet, and one known to have had power with God. Balak; the king of Moab, put confidence in him as a prophet, and through fear of Israel sent a message to him to come and curse Israel, and promised if he would do so to reward him with silver and gold (Numb. xxii. 5, 6). If Balaam's heart had been right with God, he would have made short work with Balak's message ; indeed, it would not have cost him a moment's consideration to have sent him a reply. But his heart was not right ; we see him in the condition of one acted upon by conflicting feelings. He wished to please Balak, and get his reward, at the same time not to offend God. He inwardly wished to stand well with Balak, while outwardly he wished to keep right with God. He bids the messengers to remain, that he might have time to consult the will of God. He received an answer ; God said to him, "Thou shalt not go with the men ; thou shalt not curse the people ; for they are blessed." Nothing could be plainer. The prophet evidently took this in bad part. Mark his answer to the messengers—"Get you into your land ; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you" (ver. 13).

The word "refuseth" showed the spirit which animated him. He wished to go, and was disappointed.

Balak sends a second time to Balaam some of his best men-messengers more honourable than the first, praying him to come and curse Israel, and holds out before him a greater reward, richer gifts, a more splendid bribe. The prophet professed to despise the tempting bait, and said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more" (ver. 18). It is no uncommon thing to hear a man speak slightly of that on which his heart is set. Many a miser says that he does not care at all about money; many a proud-hearted man will speak of himself as being humble. So Balaam could speak of himself as despising wealth, while in his heart he longed for it. In this state of heart, Balaam consults God again, and God answers, not as formerly by refusing his request, but by telling him that he may go. "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them, but yet the word that I shall say to thee that thou shalt do" (ver. 20). No doubt Balaam was delighted. God had answered him according to the desire of his heart. To the froward God shows Himself froward. Man wishes something, he is bent upon having it. God says you shall have it, while angry because it is cherished. He permits a man to have his perverse will gratified, to follow his blind devices. There are ten thousand instances on every side of us. A man hankers after money or fame. God grants it. He punishes him by telling him to have his wish. So Balaam eager to carry out his desire, anxious to gain the rewards, is told to go. He was so eager to go that he did not wait for the men to call him. He started off without. All this showed a heart running counter to the will of God—a heart bent on covetousness, while struggling all the time to keep appearances of obedience. This is hateful. No wonder God was angry with him. He had not proceeded far before he found obstructions in his way—the ass on which he rode rebuked him for his perverseness and folly (2 Peter ii. 15,

16). Still, he breaks through all difficulties; proceeds on his journey, until he at length comes to Balak, who conducts the money-loving prophet from place to place, in the hope that he would curse Israel; but all his attempts failed. He could not articulate a word against the will of Jehovah. He could not use the prophetic gift against Israel. He blesses those whom he is hired to curse. The king smites his hands together in sore disappointment, dismisses the prophet in wrath, and returns to his palace in despair.

What is the son of Beor now to do? Disappointed of the coveted wealth, he now sinks into the degraded character of a traitor. Seeing he could not turn God from Israel, he now seeks to turn Israel from God. He privately counselled the king of Moab to seduce the people of Israel into fornication and idolatry by means of the Moabite women. His wicked scheme succeeded. "Behold these (women) caused the children of Israel *through the counsel of Balaam*, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor" (Numb. xxxi. 16). The fierce anger of the Lord was kindled, and tens of thousands perished. The Lord told Moses to avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites. They warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and slew the kings of Midian. "Balaam also, the son of Beor, *they slew with the sword*" (Numb. xxxi. 8). This was the closing scene of Balaam's downward history.

The sad history of Balaam brings out very clearly the nature of his deadly error. We know precisely what it is. It is obviously composed of two parts. The first part *consists in his covetousness*. It was his sin, and proved his downfall. In the early part of his career he was doubtless a good man, thoroughly religious, a man of prayer. On two occasions he spent the night in prayer, waiting upon God; but he was tempted by the offer of Balak to prostitute his sacred character and office for filthy lucre. He yielded to the temptation, and stands before us as a type of apostates in Jude's time. They "ran," says Jude, "greedily

after the error of Balaam for reward." They have, says Peter, "forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter ii. 14, 16). The love of money is presented by Paul as the ground of apostacy. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10). It needs no seer's eye to be assured that this sin is doing its deadly work in the present day. Imitators of Balaam abound. Men that are recognized as Christian teachers in the Church are ready to please the great of the earth for the love of the wealth which they have to bestow. In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous. Let us guard against the temptations to covetousness, and resist them.

The second part of *his error* is seen in *his teaching*. He knew that Israel were God's chosen people—singled out and separated from other nations. This separation is most distinctly set forth, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numb. xxiii. 9). But this hireling prophet taught Balak to seduce Israel from their separation into guilty mixture with the nations and their idolatry around. The teaching of Balaam destroyed all godly separateness, and destroyed the people too, so far as it prevailed. In like manner the Church of Christ is called out from the world, and it is only too easy to apply the type in this case. Memorable and instructive are the words to the Church in Pergamos, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication" (Rev. ii. 14). These Balaam teachers sought to corrupt the disciples of Christ by tempting them to form unholy

alliances with the world, by insinuating that Christianity may exist consistently with the indulgence of the flesh, even to the commission of the most awful sins. These corrupters were allowed still to remain members of the Church, and were considered as part of the Church. "Thou hast *there*," within thee, those who hold this wicked doctrine. They were tolerated, they were not frowned upon, suspended from privileges, nor excommunicated. These teachers still exist in the Church, and they continue to influence and fascinate by their teaching the hearts of the people of God. They teach that you must not maintain the rigid line of separation, that you must be on good terms with the world. You must seek to please the world, how else will you do it good. This artful and plausible teaching is ruining thousands. It encourages the intermixture of the Church with the world, which must end in trouble, conflict, and judgment.

(3.) *Korah and his punishment.* Our serious attention is directed in few words to another way—the gainsaying of Korah, and its disastrous consequences. "And perished in the gainsaying of Korah." The word gainsaying in the Greek is *ἀντιλογία*, and means contention, opposition, contradiction. The verbal antagonism of Korah and his brethren to Moses and Aaron is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers, for our admonition and instruction. "Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Here we are plainly told that Korah and his famous men, two hundred and fifty in number, set themselves against Moses and Aaron, and

charged them with usurpation and ambition in taking too much upon them. You take too much upon you in daring to represent us ; we can represent ourselves. Are not all the Lord's people alike holy, and have we not as good a right to officiate in the priest's office as Aaron and his sons. They considered themselves to be *equally* entitled and *equally suited* to discharge the functions of the priestly office. In short, there was an open revolt against the authority of Moses, and against the priesthood of Aaron and against God Himself.

“And Moses said unto Korah,”—the leader of this desperate confederacy—“Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi : seemeth it a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself ; to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them ? And He hath brought thee near to Him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee ; *and seek ye the priesthood also ?* For which cause (*i.e.*, the priesthood) both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord : and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him ?” (Numb. xvi. 8-11).

The gainsaying of these men was speedily visited with Divine wrath. The very record is appalling to read. What must the fact have been. “The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. So they and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them ; and they perished from among the assembly” (xvi. 31-34). After the earth had opened her mouth and swallowed them up, we read, “There came a *fire* from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that had offered incense”¹ (ver. 35). We see

¹ The rebellion and judgment of Korah and his brethren in the wilderness is beyond doubt a type of the open rebellion of apostate Christendom against the authority of God in His true King and Priest, at the end of this age, and also of the terrible judgments that will speedily follow. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the

in this that fiery indignation which devours the adversaries of the Lord. Let us remember that Korah is a type of those restless subtle men in the early churches who were ambitious for high places, who sought to undermine the true servants of God in order to exalt themselves. In these modern days there are men who are not satisfied with the functions of the ministry, but openly set themselves against the rights of Christ. They call themselves priests, in contrast with the people, distinguished by titles and dress from others. They profess to act on behalf of others, assuming priestly functions which only belong to Christ Himself. This is in principle the sin of Korah, their end will be according to their works.

These are types of the apostacies and heresies which would arise in future times. In the way of Cain we see departure from God; in Balaam, who taught error for the sake of gain, religious corruption; in the gainsaying of Korah, ambition and insubordination, which bring swift destruction. In these three examples we see the future in miniature.

Note how, in the verses following the description of the apostates corresponding to the three examples just given, they are described in the strongest language, and by the use of many striking similitudes. "*These* are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding them-

Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev. xvii. 14). "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 19, 20).

Bishop Horne remarks,—“The sudden destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who, for stirring up a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, ‘went down alive into the pit,’ seems to be here (Rev. xix. 20) alluded to, as the grand representation of the manner in which the ‘bottomless pit’ shall one day shut its mouth for ever upon all the impenitent enemies of the true King of Israel and great High Priest of our profession.”

selves without fear." In the primitive days of Christianity believers met together in private houses for communion and mutual edification. Love-feasts were held to promote unity, to testify, continue and increase brotherly love among themselves. The love-feasts and the Lord's supper were separate ordinances, but frequently combined. These evil and subtle men came into these love-feast meetings. They were no doubt pretentious, forward, and active in the assembly of the faithful. They were spots, blemishes, in these feasts; for, instead of eating and drinking in moderation, they pampered their appetite and ate to excess, without the least sense of their own sin and shame. This is implied in the clause, "feeding themselves without fear." In this way those feasts of charity were abused; and in the middle of the fourth century, the Council of Laodicea prohibited them to be held in the churches. "Clouds they are without water." Like clouds which promise rain, but contain no water, and let fall no fertilizing showers: empty of all saving knowledge and true holiness, they can impart no refreshment to their flocks by their teaching.

"Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots." Trees without fruit, though in spring there may have been buds of promise, but in autumn without fruit. "Twice dead." Dead in trespasses and sin, which they are by nature, and dead by apostacy from the faith in Christ, past all hope of recovery. Like trees irrecoverably and totally dead, being "plucked up by the roots."

"Raging waves of the sea," turbulent and violent against all who oppose them, "foaming out their shame." "Wandering stars," which have left their original position, and are unsteady and erratic in their course. They who leave the truth know not where they shall stop, "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." As heaven is an inheritance reserved for the faithful, so this thick gross darkness is reserved as the certain heritage of these deceivers for ever.

EXPOSITION IV.

Enoch's prophecy of the coming of the Lord to execute vengeance upon the ungodly.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of *these*, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”—Verses 14, 15.

THE sacred narrative of Enoch's life is sweet and simple. In Genesis we read that “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, that “before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” In this Epistle Jude has given us Enoch's prophecy. It is not found anywhere else in Scripture. How Jude came by it we know not, whether he read it in an old book now lost, or through tradition, is not known; nor need we be curious to know, it is enough for us to know that it is here inserted under the sanction and authority of the Holy Ghost as the inspired prophecy of Enoch.

It strikes us as very remarkable that Jude, before the canon of Holy Scripture was closed—there being only one other book to be written—should be moved by the Divine Spirit, to preserve for the Church the prophecy of Enoch in the ark of the recognised canonical books. Enoch is said to be the seventh from Adam. This number is very suggestive. It marked the age in which Enoch lived. As Enoch was the seventh in his descent from Adam, he is considered by some to be a type of those who will not sleep the sleep of death, but will undergo a change as foretold by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 51). It was therefore very appropriate that

Enoch should prophesy of our Lord's coming to judge the ungodly, and commence the millennial era—the seventh period of the world's history.

The coming of Christ, in that early age, was foretold in two aspects—as a *Sufferer*, and as a *Judge*. The first coming was foretold to Adam. The seed of the woman was to suffer—his heel was to be bruised as the means of bruising the serpent's head, and of saving the fallen. This one promise was the ground of hope to Adam, to Abel, to Seth, and to the pious men in the line of Seth. How far this word of promise was understood by them we know not. It doubtless formed the subject of their conversation, and ministered comfort to them in those dark days amidst surrounding vice and ungodliness. Christ then was the hope and consolation of His people; they rested on the promise, and died in faith. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the second coming of the Lord as Judge. After six patriarchal heads had dwelt on the first coming as taught in the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head: the seventh—the completing one—tells of His second coming with His saints to execute His fiery vengeance on the ungodly. This and similar prophecies claim our serious and thoughtful consideration.

Note I. *The great event announced, and announced as with a trumpet's voice.*—“Behold, the Lord cometh!” These are solemn words calculated to awaken attention. The prophets often proclaimed His coming. Loud and often has the trumpet peal gone forth—“Behold, the Lord cometh!” The coming is certain, and is spoken of as nigh at hand. If Enoch in his time said the Lord cometh, we may say with more solemn emphasis in these last times, The Lord cometh! He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The coming draweth nigh. Yes, whether we consider it or not, it will and does draw nigh. The Judge is on His way. Every setting sun takes a day from the world's duration. The portion of the wicked is so much less, and the time of their punishment so much approached. The Lord cometh,

and His reward is with Him, to give to every one according as his work shall be.

But though the coming of the Lord is announced as in trumpet tones, it fails to awaken men out of their lethargy. The men of the world ignore the coming of the Lord, and its momentous consequences. They laugh at it, and would feign laugh down the people who are simple enough to believe it. They dispute it, and raise the scoffing cry,—“Where is the promise of His coming?” They can see no signs of its arrival. It is all a threat, a boast, a fable. There are even professing Christians who would rather not hear about it, and who if they could have their way, would erase it from their creed and silence all preaching concerning it. They do not indeed mock with the mockers, but they say in their hearts, “My Lord delayeth His coming.” They will not give attention to it. They are careless and unconcerned. It is just when men are saying peace and safety, putting away the thought of the Lord’s arrival, it is just then that He breaks in upon them as a thief in the night. So that the very fact that there are few who believe in the nearness of the Advent, is just the fact that should arouse and quicken and alarm. For in an hour we think not the Son of Man cometh.

Note II. *That Enoch foresaw how and in what manner the Lord would come—not by Himself alone, but attended “with ten thousands of His saints.”* There are two distinct stages of the Lord’s coming. In the first, He comes to awaken the sleeping saints, and to change the living ones. This is spoken of in 1 Thess. iv. The saints must be gathered *to* him, before they can come *with* him. They must first ascend, before they descend. Between these two stages it is certain that an interval of time will occur, but of its duration we can make no positive assertion. After this interval of time, will follow the second stage of Christ’s visible coming, clothed in majesty and power. It will indeed be the time of manifestation both to Him and His people; “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we

also appear with Him in glory." Enoch was the first of the holy prophets to tell us of the manner of His coming; "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints." He is sometimes spoken of as coming in the clouds. "I saw," said Daniel, "in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the clouds of heaven" (Dan. vii. 13). When our Lord stood before the High Priest, He said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). There are passages which speak of the holy angels as His attendants, "The Son of Man shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26). Sometimes they are called mighty angels. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels" (2 Thess. i. 7). There are other passages which speak of the Lord's coming with all His saints. The prophet Zechariah said, "The Lord my God *shall come*, and *all* the saints with thee" (Zech. xiv. 5). Myriads of saints as well as angels shall appear with Him in glory.

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train."

Yes, a vast number of saints and angels will attend His coming. The eye of faith sees Him coming, not in humiliation, weakness, and sorrow as before, but in overwhelming majesty, power, and glory, coming to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. May the mind and heart of the reader be impressed with the Apostle's pregnant word, "Maranatha!" "*The Lord cometh.*"

We come now to note,

III. *The purpose of the Lord's coming with His saints to the earth.* He comes as stated in the words of this prophecy—"to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches

which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." The time in which Enoch prophesied should not be overlooked. It was a time of abounding iniquity, of blasphemy, and open denial of God. Ungodliness prevailed in speech and deed. It may be reasonably supposed that this prophecy had reference to the flood then impending. The ungodly sinners of that age were fairly warned of coming judgment. After Enoch was translated the judgment overtook them. The flood came and took them all away. The ungodly in his own times against whom he had to contend were types and representatives of the ungodly in the times immediately preceding the Lord's second coming. Now it was "of these," or "concerning these," as Jude expressly tells us, that Enoch prophesied.

There are other prophecies beside Enoch's, that speak of the Lord's coming to exercise judgment upon the ungodly, and to root them out of the earth. Oh, that men would *hear* and carefully ponder them. Listen to the words of Isaiah, "Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. xxvi. 21). Again, "Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire" (lxvi. 15). Similar prophecies are found in Joel ii. 1-3, and in Malachi iv. 1. In the New Testament we have the testimony of the Lord Himself, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 37). "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke xvii. 28-30). In the parable of the nobleman, the Son of Man is represented as going into a far country to receive a kingdom, and on his return he saith, "But those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me" (Luke xix. 17). How clearly Paul states

the purpose of the Lord's coming, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). In accordance with this is the vision of John, "Behold, He cometh in clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). Thus He who came to preach the day of salvation, cometh again to proclaim the day of vengeance. He who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, will lead His ten thousand to the prey as the lion of the tribe of Judah. In view of the terrors of that day we may join in asking, "Who shall abide the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appeareth? In that day the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low." In that day men will quail before the brightness of that face they have so long despised, and will call upon the rocks and the mountains, or aught else conceivable, to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

The world is rapidly ripening for judgment. Ungodliness is the special feature of the age, and one of the many signs of its close. Ungodly men abound—men who make a mock at prophecy and prophetic expositors, who treat the Lord's coming with hardihood and derision. Their language is, "Let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh and come, that we may know it" (Isa. v. 19). They will ridicule the doctrine and brave His wrath. Whether it is believed or not, the Lord is at hand, to pass judgment upon these mockers, to confute these gainsayers, and to execute upon them deserved wrath. Their own consciences will bear witness against them, and condemn them, so that they will stand self-condemned before the Lord. Likewise "their hard speeches," and malicious opposition against Him, and against His people, will rise up against them, for if we shall have to give account for "every idle word," much more for

wicked and malicious words. Alas! how many thousands, nay, millions of persons of these latter days fall into this judgment and righteous condemnation.

Oh, reader, whether saved or unsaved, ponder we pray you this ancient prophecy of coming judgment. If saved by personal faith in Christ, take heed lest you fall into the error of saying in the heart, like the "evil servant," my Lord delayeth His coming. Watch and pray, live and walk as did Enoch, to please God, that you may be among the blessed ones who will be taken to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with the Lord. If unsaved—unprepared for the coming of the Lord—if you are afraid, and feel that you dare not face the Judge, do not, we beseech you, seek to stifle your fear of coming judgment by dismissing it from your mind. You may escape the awful judgments that will be executed upon the ungodly. Now is your day of grace and mercy. Now repentance and remission of sins are preached in the Saviour's name; now He receives and pardons the greatest sinners that come to Him. But oh, beware lest the Lord Jesus come before you have really believed in Him to the saving of the soul; for when He comes again, it will be too late for repentance and salvation. Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take thee away with His stroke. Again, we say, Beware, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

EXPOSITION V.

A further description of the characteristics of the ungodly.

“These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit.”—Vers. 16–19.

WE have already seen on whom vengeance will be executed at the Lord’s coming. They are the ungodly. Enoch prophesied of these, of their ungodly speeches and ungodly deeds. The verses that follow, and which now claim our attention, refer to the same characters, and give other *views* and *aspects* of their ungodliness.

Let us then take a brief glance at what is said of them.

I. They are said to be *murmurers* and *complainers*. “These are murmurers, complainers.” Such characters have appeared in the hoary past. Many of the children of Israel in the wilderness doubted God’s love in bringing them out of Egypt. They disbelieved His intention to give them the land promised to their fathers; they distrusted Moses as their guide; they broke out in murmuring words against God and His servant Moses. So in the days of Christ there were murmurers. “There was much murmuring among the people concerning Him.” “The Jews murmured at Him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.” “The scribes and Pharisees murmured against the disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners.” So in the apostles’ days, the murmuring spirit showed itself in the churches. “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”

“Neither murmur ye, as some of *them* also murmured.” These murmurers spoken of in the wilderness in the time of Christ, and in the early churches, seem to us as historic types of the murmurers of these last days. They are foretold in a variety of places by the prophets. They are said to “speak grievous things, and proudly and contemptuously against the righteous” (Psalm xxxi. 18). Such persons are never pleased with anything. They find fault with everybody, and are dissatisfied with everything. They complain of their condition in life, finding fault with God and His providential dealings ; making and governing worlds in their own ways, persons whom neither God nor man can please.

And is not this the spirit of our so-called enlightened age ? Is it not true that these murmurers and complainers abound in our day ? Many of our popular orators complain against the circumstances and condition of certain classes in this country, and insist that they are a people kept down by tyranny and oppression. Is not this statement borne out by the spirit and tone of most of the journals of the day ? This dissatisfaction, this spirit of discontent comes out in various ways. Now it is an assault upon aristocracy, now a crusade against the rich, now men are for dividing the land amongst the people. Now they are for changing the rulers and ministers of the government. The rights of the people, the wrongs of the people, are echoed and re-echoed everywhere. The very air seems infected with the spirit of discontent.

It may be said that there have been murmurers, complainers in all ages ; that is true. Still, the inspired men of old direct our attention to this sin of murmuring as a special feature in society at this stage of the world’s history, and as one of the signs of the end.

2. These murmurers are charged with *the sin of sensual indulgence*. “Walking after their own lusts.” There is in connection with the state of discontent, indulgence of their own lusts. What are they ? The love of the world, the love of fame, the love of power and vain glory. These and such like are among the deceitful lusts of the flesh. They

take pleasure in them, pursue them, serve them, and fulfil them. Their own lusts ; they are inbred. They come from the bad soil of the human heart. Their own ; they harbour them, lodge them, and give them heart-room. Their own lusts, as they are practically given to them, live in them and walk after them. Their own lusts in a special sense, as they are under their power, obey them willingly, and are the cravings and desires they are most addicted to.

3. These men are given to *boast of themselves*. "Their mouth speaketh great swelling words." They are proud, self-conceited persons. They think highly of their own opinions, and know everything better than anyone else. They speak in a haughty manner of their independence and liberty, and affirm that they are free to gratify their own inclinations without control. In these days it cannot be denied that there are a large class of men who take a pride in showing a lawless and rebellious spirit. They claim the right to indulge any lusts of the flesh they may please. They cannot brook restraint, civil or religious. They are aroused to anger and resentment if anybody thwarts them in the fulfilment of their carnal amusements and pleasures. "They set their mouth against the heavens," disregard God's word, follow their own notions, and pursue their own thoughts.

4. *They are ready to fawn and flatter others*. "Having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage." Thus we may see in the same persons a spirit of boasting allied to a spirit of fawning upon those who are the favourites and leaders of their party. We see this spirit engendered in persons who form part of religious congregations. Favourite ministers may be idolized, and all they say received as pure truth though opposed to the word of God. The former they admire, the latter they do not respect. This servile class may include in it ministers who can fawn and flatter the rich, and overlook their faults in order to gain advantage by them. These are truly pitiable characters. There is, however, a respect due to persons which we are bound to

pay. An admiration even that is allowed. Ministers of Christ are to be "honoured as instruments, not adored as deities." Our earthly parents are to be honoured and obeyed because our heavenly Father enjoins it. Elders in the church who rule well are to be counted worthy of double honour. We are bound in all justice to prefer some men before others for their age, real excellencies, and relation to us.

The admiration here condemned is to say the least *excessive* and *insincere*, if not hollow and hypocritical. It is when we praise the endowments and qualifications of great men for advantage. It is to admire unduly their bodily appearance, their outward condition. And thus I take it, that Jude in this place, accuses these servile seducers for their excessive sinful flattery of men in eminence, in wealth, in power, and outward glory, for their own gain and advantage.

EXPOSITION VI.

Memorable Words.

SAINT JUDE now appeals to the faithful to remember the words of the holy apostles in reference to these desperate characters.

“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.”—Vers. 17-19.

Learn 1st, *That the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ concur in their testimony of the apostacy* of these times. The warnings and encouragement of the saints in these days would be incomplete, if confined to this solitary Epistle. But we have the concurrent testimony of Christ and his apostles concerning these days, showing that nothing is occurring unforeseen. “When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth” (Luke xviii. 8)? This is a strong implication of a widespread apostacy impending (see Romans xvi. 17, 18). Paul in writing to Timothy says, “The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. iv. 1). And, further, “*This know*,” said he, speaking prophetically, “that in the last days perilous times shall come.” Giving the moral characteristics of the times, self-love, covetous, proud, self-willed, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. The Apostle Peter gives a similar testimony: “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you ; in both which I stir up your pure minds in remembrance ; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy

prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Peter iii. 1-3). The Apostle John, in his first Epistle, reminds us of what Paul had said of the coming of Anti-Christ: "Ye have *heard* that Antichrist shall come" (ch. ii. 18). Jude here refers to the same subject, and speaks of murmurers walking in ungodly lusts, separatists, sensual, unspiritual. Thus the Apostles Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, all speak of the last days as evil times, all foretell apostacy which is only extirpated by judgment.

2nd. The words of warning spoken by the apostles in reference to these last times should be *frequently present to the mind*. They claim our reverent attention. "Remember!" This gentle monition is needful. We are apt to be forgetful of what the Holy Spirit has said of the mockers who will pursue their ungodly lusts and pleasures up to the very hour of judgment. Remember! Be concerned to have right views of the apostacy, and of the close of this dispensation. "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before of the apostles," when you hear from the pulpit and the platform of the gradual renovation of mankind by scientific, moral, or even scriptural means. Remember! When you hear men of advanced thought boast of the age in which we live as the most glorious and hopeful ever known. Remember! Don't be misled by such boasting. The words spoken by holy men of God lead us to expect a different state of things. What! says the social reformer, with a little ill-humour, would you have us believe that the world is not progressing? Look at the triumphs of civilisation, the refinements of art, the provisions for comfort; listen to the cry for education; watch the spread of knowledge. These are improvements that cannot be gainsaid. We admit all this. But let us not conceal from ourselves this truth, that the improvement of the world is superficial, not real; that is to say, not inherent, or necessarily lasting. If we rest our hopes of the final triumph of

goodness, truth, and righteousness on what man can do, on popular theories of education, politics, and legislation, we must sooner or later be bitterly disappointed. Remember ye the words of warning given by the inspired apostles! Read, study them for yourselves, for by so doing you will be best prepared to form an enlightened judgment of the character and close of this dispensation. You will be kept from entertaining fallacious hopes of the world getting better, and from false applications of promises of blessedness to the present age, which refer to, and will be fulfilled in the millennial period. Remember the words of the apostles of our Lord, how they told you there should be mockers, or scoffers, in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. "These be they," says the Spirit of truth, "who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit."

EXPOSITION VII.

The duty of believers to establish themselves in the faith.

WE have felt it to be no pleasant task to dwell upon the sad picture presented in this Epistle of the character and doom of those who depart from the faith. Hideous as the picture is, we dare not modify or alter any of its dark features. It would be dishonest to do so. The picture is given that we may take warning, and not be disturbed in our faith, when we witness even in the Church such characters as correspond to those here portrayed. It is now a relief and a pleasure to turn from the subject of apostacy to consider the needful and practical exhortation addressed by Jude to believers,

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”—Vers. 20, 21.

In this exhortation St. Jude breathes a tender concern for believers in his, and in all time. Thrice in this short Epistle he calls them “Beloved.” This precious appellation shows the Apostle’s interest in them. He congratulates them, as the “beloved in God the Father, and the preserved in Christ;” and contrasts their blessed state with that of others who were sensual, having not the Spirit. But he saw they were in circumstances of great danger. Various errors encompassed them about, and it was particularly needful to put them on their guard. Certain men had crept in stealthily among them, and began to sow their bad seed. The Apostle also saw that the evil which crept into the Church in his day would work on and on, and finally unfold itself in all the terrible forms of apostacy in the last days. The practical exhortation, therefore, addressed to the beloved

then, is of the deepest importance *now*. In this exhortation four things are earnestly enjoined, viz. : Mutual edification ; praying in the Holy Ghost ; preservation in the love of God ; and looking expectantly for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life. Such are the special duties and exercises incumbent upon us in these times.

I. *Mutual edification* : " Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." This naturally leads us to speak of the foundation of the building, and then the building itself.

(1.) *The foundation*. The spiritual edifice to be reared must rest on something—it must have a basis. The basis is " our most holy faith." By faith here we understand, not the grace, or act of faith, but the word of faith—the word to be believed. The Gospel is called the faith, because it reveals the doctrines of faith, the truths to be believed to salvation, and more particularly the doctrine of faith in Christ. Christ Jesus is the primary object of faith—the sure, elect, and precious foundation-stone. To Him we must cleave, and on Him alone we must build. As we rest upon a man by trusting to his word, so we must build upon Christ by hearing, receiving, and believing His words. " He that heareth My words," said He, " and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man that built his house upon a rock." As wise men we must build ourselves up, not on sand, not on human traditions, or formulated creeds, or the wisdom of men, but on those foundation truths and central facts of our common Christianity which the Gospels and the Epistles unfold. The Apostle Paul tells us what that faith is which was delivered to him, and which he had made known to others as the basis on which they may safely build for eternity. " Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, and by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I declared unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was

buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 1-4). "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

These are a few of the vital truths of the Gospel, and our faith, our hope, our eternal salvation rests upon them. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 19, 20). In the Apostle's touching address to the Ephesians, as he was taking leave of them, he said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts xx. 32). "The word of God's grace" is clearly the word of faith, the foundation on which we must seek to be firmly established, that we may be able to stand against all the errors of the present day, and to build up a holy character.

(2.) The foundation is *holy in its nature and origin*. It is not only designated holy, but "most holy." It must be so, as it proceeds from God, and is a manifestation of His holiness and grace. The faith is the communication of God's glorious thoughts to us. Its teachings received into the heart are purifying in their operation, its precepts are holy, its promises are holy, its ordinances are holy. The great end and design of the faith is man's freedom from all sin, and his restoration to God's holy image. It produces holiness of life. It is indeed worthy to be called "most holy faith," in contrast with the most unholy faiths of human origin.

II. *The building enjoined*: "Build up yourselves." This is work that can only be enjoined upon those who are in the faith. Beloved, you are at once yourselves the builders and

the stones. You are warned to take heed how you build, and to the kind of material used in the building. You must see to it that the material corresponds with the foundation. Your most holy faith, as we have seen, is the precious basis; on that you are called to rear up a holy spiritual structure. It may be asked, how can we build up ourselves? Is not this building the work of the Spirit? Are we not His workmanship, builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit? True we are, and unless the Spirit of God build this spiritual house, all labour is vain. But then God builds by means. He depends upon you doing your work. He requires your co-operation in raising this spiritual edifice. He says, "Build yourselves up." This is what you are to do, and what you can do by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Take firm hold of the living word, feed upon it daily, and it will sustain and nourish the inner man, and you will thereby grow up in truth and grace, in wisdom and strength, in purity and goodness. You will slowly but surely unfold in your character the beauties of holiness, qualities more valuable, solid, and durable than gold, silver, or precious stones.

These words evidently set forth the responsibility of the members of the Church of Christ to *build up each other, to help one another*. I would earnestly impress upon your minds the practical importance of this work. Is it not true that you are called to be ministers to each other, according to the measure of the gift of Christ? While you are concerned for your individual edification, improvement, and progress in Divine things, you should be equally concerned for that of your brethren. This is incumbent upon you as living stones in the temple of the Lord. There must be mutual service. "By love serve one another." Mutual esteem: "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Mutual prayer: "praying one for another." Mutual oversight: "looking diligently," that is, taking an oversight of each other, "lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing

up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Mutual admonition: "Teaching and admonishing one another." Admonition may sound harsh in our ears; we do not like it; but here the admonition, whether given or received, is "in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord." Mutual edification: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye do." "Let us, therefore, follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Study the means, and take pains to build each other up. The wisest and strongest in the Church may be edified; the weakest and most illiterate may edify. As you are united together by one faith, and mutually dependent, endeavour to instruct one another in the knowledge of Divine things, to improve each other in every good and holy purpose, to establish each other in every Christian principle and disposition, to strengthen each other for the fulfilment of every duty, that each might be settled and immovable in the faith and obedience of the Gospel. The substance of the exhortation, is, endeavour to make one another wise and strong, holy and happy. Build yourselves up. Erect a holy superstructure on your most holy faith.

How is this holy work to be done? It may be done—

(1.) *By coming frequently together for prayer and fellowship one with another.* It is in these social meetings we may be the means of encouraging and strengthening each other in the Lord. Men of different nations, and of widely different habits of thought can associate together for the advancement of science, and the cultivation of art; and shall we not gladly associate together for mutual spiritual edification. It is said of God-fearing men in Malachi's time—a time of religious declension—that "they spake often one to another." It is said of those new converts who were added to the Church on the day of Pentecost, that "they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship:" that is, they continued to meet for fellowship as a means of growth in strength and knowledge, in love

and holiness. They were much together for prayer and communion ; watching over one another ; sustaining and being sustained ; edifying and being edified ; blessing and being blessed ; caring and being cared for. Christians now as in bygone days must often meet together as the most effectual means of fostering this active sympathy, this reciprocal affection, this loving oneness of heart and soul. We need each other's prayers, sympathies, and help. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works ; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another ; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

(2.) This work of building up may be done *'by godly intercourse and conversation with each other.* Keep it in view when you meet in the street, or in the familiar and social circles of life. It is to be feared that the true interests of the soul are often lost sight of at such times. There is reserve and reticence on Divine things. We can talk of the news and occurrences of the day. We can speak of business and the state of trade. We can build each other up in politics ; but we meet and part without a word of spiritual counsel and encouragement. In your inter-communion with each other, beware lest the enemy should betray you into conversation unbecoming the purity which ought to mark the character of those who profess to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." It is not enough to avoid light talk, easy gossip, foolish jesting that is unprofitable. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man." In this way, you may mutually instruct and edify one another.

Oh, beloved, see to it, we beseech you, that you build up yourselves individually and collectively. Be true and faithful to the holy and happy relationship into which you have entered. There is much need for this. We see on every

side departure from the truth. "The things which are most surely believed among us" are no longer unquestioned. The foundations of our faith are secretly undermined by some, and openly assailed by others. The poison of error is at work in our churches, and even the "very elect" are in danger of being carried away by "false teachers." What, then, is your duty in the present state of things? It is to seek fresh supplies of grace from God, to study the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that you may fortify yourselves against the torrent of evil. Carry out this exhortation, and you shall not waver like a wave of the sea, nor be driven by the winds of false teaching, but remain settled and unshaken like a house upon a rock.

It is worthy of note that Jude makes no reference to the work of the Christian minister. We know it pleased the Lord when He ascended up on high, to give pastors and teachers, and to endow them with suitable gifts for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body. Nor has the Great Head of the Church ceased to give ministerial gifts to edify; but the prophetic spirit of Jude saw that the time would come when many in the ministry would fail to teach the people knowledge, that their gifts would be improperly directed, or perverted from their specific purpose. He therefore exhorts believers at such times especially to fraternize and co-operate with each other. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves, not on your doings and feelings, but on the basis of your most holy faith. Building is an upward growth, a progressive work; it is done by little and little; but yet many littles will bring forth much, and make a beautiful building in the end. Continue then in the work; add layer upon layer, add grace to grace, add faith to faith, virtue to virtue, knowledge to knowledge; and never cease till the headstone is added, and the building perfect and complete in Christ.

EXPOSITION VIII.

“Prayer in the Holy Ghost” a sweet privilege and a profitable habit, giving strength for spiritual work.

JUDE joins building and praying together. “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” The two are so related to each other that we cannot proceed with the one if we neglect the other. There can be no progressive development of the Christian character, no conscious advance in spiritual life, in heavenly love, in Divine strength where there is no prayer. There can be no real success in the Church, no growth in the piety of her members, no increase in the number of the saved, where there is no prayer.

Having on a former occasion dwelt upon the mutual building enjoined, let us now direct our attention to that which is evidently essential to success in the work, “praying in the Holy Ghost.” This is what we must be doing in connection with all our work for God. What is prayer? Prayer, that which is recognised in Scripture as such, consists not so much in our definition of helplessness as the feeling of it. There may be “the form of sound words,” and no prayer; and there may be true prayer, and no formal repetition of words. There is prayer in a look, a groan. Prayer is the breathing out of the soul’s sincere desire after God. It is the look of the dependent child to its own loving Father in all the consciousness of utter helplessness, and in all the sweetness of filial trust.

Prayer is the evidence of a soul quickened into life. It is “God’s breath in man” returning to its source. There is no spiritual life where the breathing of prayer is not carried on. The soul that lives breathes; and this “spiritual

respiration" is as essential to the life of the soul as the air we breathe is to the life of the body. He who is able to speak to God in prayer, lives; for prayer is the surest indication of this heaven-born life. See! yonder lies a human body—I am told it is a corpse—lifeless and breathless. I approach and ask those who are looking on, "Is there any hope of life?" One steps forth and says, "There is hope, for I have put to his lips a glass, and I am certain the glass is dimmed with breath. I have examined, and there is a slight pulsation. There is life where there is breath." And blessed be God, there is spiritual life where there is prayer. Weak and languid it may be, but there is life where there is prayer; when it ceases life is lost.

This prayer, which is the sign of spiritual life, is distinguished by one glorious peculiarity; it is *in* the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of life, but He is designated "the Spirit of grace and supplication." He is the Author and Prompter of all genuine prayer. He prepares, disposes, and enables us to pray for ourselves and others. Every acceptable petition is the fruit of His indwelling presence. No prayer can be acceptable that is not offered up in and by the Spirit. On this point the testimony of Scripture is very explicit. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." "We . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

From these passages it is obvious that the prayer which

is required from us is prayer in the Holy Ghost. It is by the light of the Holy Spirit that we come to know the Father's name, to rest on the Saviour's merits, and to plead believingly the promises of mercy. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches us what we are to pray for, and *how*—drawing out our souls in holy desires after spiritual things, and in fervent supplications for others, filling our mouth with arguments, leading us to plead our cause at the throne of grace, and to urge our request with importunity till we prevail.

“Let Moses in the spirit groan,
And God cries out let Me alone.”

“Praying in the Holy Ghost” may sound strange in the ear of the formalist and unspiritual; “for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” But every true Christian knows what it means because he hath obtained the spiritual faculty, and will be ready to exclaim, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”

The spirit of prayer is what is most needed. What will the form, the habit, or even the gift of prayer do for you without the spirit of prayer? You may have the gift, but not the spirit of prayer. The gift and the spirit of prayer are two distinct things. What is termed the gift is not a supernatural communication, so much as a diligent improvement of natural parts. A retentive memory, fluency of utterance, natural fervour, are the chief elements which constitute the gift of prayer. You may not be gifted in prayer, but you may possess the spirit, and that is far more important than the gift. For, as Bishop Leighton has well said, “It is not the gilded paper and the good writing of a petition that prevails with a king, but the sense of it.” Nor is it the fine phraseology, nor the rich sentiment, nor the splendid imagery of our prayers that God regards—far from it. It is the deep feeling, the holy earnestness, the strong faith of the petitioner that pierces heaven,

enters the cars of the Lord of Sabaoth, and moves Him graciously to answer. It is far better, therefore, to have the spirit than the gift of prayer. The two can bear no comparison in importance. The gift of prayer may make us acceptable to man, but it is the grace that makes us acceptable to God. We may be puffed up by the gift, but the grace always lays and keeps us low. The gift may be destroyed against our will, we may lose our speech, but nothing outward can take away the spirit of prayer within; that has a tongue which no persecution can silence or destroy. And with regard to sin, the spirit of prayer is much more opposed to it than the gift. We may have a natural power and pathos in prayer, though inconsistencies prevail in our daily conduct; but if the spirit of prayer live in us, all sin must quail and be prostrate before it.

There are professing Christians who tell us that they cannot pray, that they have no gift in prayer, and on that ground try to excuse their silence in prayer meetings. What? a Christian who cannot pray! This can never be. We should as soon believe that there was a soldier that could not fight, a scholar that could not read, a mariner never on board a vessel in his life, as believe a man who told us he was a Christian and could not pray. Let those who never or seldom pray in a prayer meeting, supposing they lack the gift, get the spirit, and that will improve the gift. For while it is true as we have said, that a man may have the gift and not the spirit of prayer, it is equally true to say that he who has the spirit will improve the gift. We have known new converts for example by living near to God after the new birth, acquire greater freedom and power in the exercise of prayer in six months, than others who have enjoyed less of the Spirit of God have acquired in six years. Oh, let the young timid disciple who feels it to be a great trial to pray in our social assemblies, get the spirit of prayer and be more in secret prayer with God, and he will soon find it simple enough to pour out his heart with others in prayer—"duty will cease to be a load, and worship a task." He

will be ready anywhere and at any moment for the exercise. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is life and power, liberty and unction, faith and everything that constitutes acceptable prayer.

We shall never pray as we ought, that is with fervency and power, unless we pray in the Holy Ghost. Nothing will do as a substitute for the Spirit; and nothing will make up for this deficiency. A man may have a strong intellect, a cultivated mind, a fine taste, a flowing eloquence, a musical voice, but all will not make up for the absence of the Spirit. Who has not felt dull and weary while listening to a prayer full of good thoughts and kind sentiments, and expressed in language scrupulously accurate, but which has not been offered in the power of the Holy Ghost? While a brother of very little ability, of awkward manner and stammering utterance has been pleading with God the Father in the Holy Ghost, a power from on high has pervaded and moved the whole assembly—

“’Twas e’en as if an angel shook his wings.”

Yes, there was real power. We want more of this; we can do without fluency, but we cannot do without power. “A fluency in prayer,” observes Dr. A. Clarke, “is not essential to praying; a man may pray most powerfully in the estimation of God, who is not able to utter a word. The unutterable groan is big with meaning, and God understands it because it is the language of His own Spirit. Some desires are too mighty to be expressed—there is no language expressive enough to give them proper form and distinct vocal sound. Such desires show that they come from God; and as they come from Him, so they express what God is disposed to do, and what He has purposed to do. Those who experience these inward groanings in the spirit and unutterable longings at the throne of grace for their own holiness, the triumph of truth and the salvation of men, are the true Israel of God, that have power with God and man, and prevail.”

How may we know that we pray in the Spirit?

We answer

(1.) If we pray in the Spirit we shall pray much in the words of the Spirit. We shall be prompted to express the desires kindled in our hearts in the dialect of the Spirit. The very prayers indited by the Spirit of God and offered by devout men in olden time, will often be upon our lips; such as these, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." "Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort." "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." "Lord, help me." "Quicken me according to Thy word." "Sanctify me through Thy truth." The Holy Spirit honours His word, and will lead us to remind God of what He has said and done, and to translate His words into prayer and His promises into arguments.

(2.) If we pray in the Spirit, we shall pray in the name of Jesus. There will be something more than the formal mention of it. We shall rest upon it, and pray through it. We shall go to God with the eye of faith on what Christ is and what He has done, as supplying the only warrant and ground of approach. Prayer in the Spirit through the name of Jesus will be heard. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in *My* name, He will give it you."

(3.) If we pray in the Spirit, we shall pray in subjection to the known will of God. "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." He makes known to us the will of God, and enables us to present our request in subjection to and in accordance with His will and pleasure.

(4.) If we pray in the Spirit, we shall pray in faith. We shall take hold of the promises with firmness, and be fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is able to perform. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John v. 14, 15).

These are the distinguishing features of prayer in the

Holy Ghost. If we realize the value of such prayer, we shall prize very highly the presence of the Holy Spirit. For where the Spirit is, there will be power and success in prayer. Let us make much of His indwelling presence ; let us cherish every feeling which He excites in the mind ; attend to His faintest whisper. Let us take heed that in nothing we grieve Him ; for if the Holy Spirit be grieved and hindered by absorbing cares, self-indulgence, idle amusements and other sins, we shall lose communion with God, lack power in prayer, become cold and formal, and be in danger of giving up prayer altogether. Lord, what were my life, if I could not pray ! It would be my burden, and how can I pray without Thy Spirit ? Send forth Thy Spirit into my heart that I may cry, "Abba Father !"

"The prayer I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the Spirit give by which I pray."

EXPOSITION IX.

The command to preserve the love of God in the heart.

“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”—Ver. 21.

ALL the parts of this precious exhortation are in harmony. It is by building up ourselves on our most holy faith, and by praying in the Holy Ghost, that we most effectually keep ourselves in the love of God. It is assumed that we know God, that we have entered into His love, and that His love has entered into us; and therefore Jude in these words counsels us to keep in it. He says to us, in effect, this Divine love is a safe fortress, abide therein. It is a rich possession, retain it. It is a holy atmosphere, continually live in it. Keep in the happy conscious enjoyment of it. Rest in it, and be satisfied with it. “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.”

The exhortation to keep in the love of God implies the possibility of losing it. The charge brought against the Church at Ephesus was that she had left her “first love.” The Divine displeasure was awakened, and tender monitions given her to repent, and do her first works. We are pained by the conviction which is forcing itself upon us, that “the love of many is waxing cold.” The glow and freshness of their first love is faded, its force is spent. They have failed through one cause and another to keep themselves in the love of God. This sad fact is attested by too many witnesses to admit of a doubt. The love of God is transferred to the world. What Paul said of Demas Christ may say of many—they have forsaken me, having loved the present evil world.

As declensions from the love of God are so common in the present day we shall endeavour to enforce, and, if

possible, to impress upon believers this important precept, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." There are *special reasons* that should lead us to constantly aim at this.

(1.) Keep yourselves in the love of God, as it is *the essence of your religious life*. The love of God, that is to say, the love which we exercise towards God, is love in its highest exercise, and directed towards its noblest object. Love is justly represented as the essence of the new-born life of the soul. For as soon as the heart is renewed, it turns to God as the supreme object of complacency and desire. It comprehends delight in God, confidence in God, obedience to God, and every other religious sentiment. As religion is "a tree of life," so love is the sap by which the tree is made to grow and flourish and bring forth fruit. Let this Divine element be lost, and the tree from root to branch, and from branch to the feeblest twig, would lose its vitality and freshness: its form and symmetry might be preserved for a while, but it would be nothing more than a withered and dead symmetry. The Christian is called to adorn the Gospel of his Lord and Saviour. To do this he must be animated and stimulated by this love in the discharge of all his duties towards God and towards his fellow-creatures. His faith must work by love, his labour must be the activity of love, his patience must be the endurance of love, his hope the longing of love, and every other grace must have its root in love. It is the diamond among the jewels in the believer's breastplate. The other graces shine like the precious stones of nature with their own peculiar lustre and various hues, but the diamond is white. Now, in white all the other colours are united; so in love is centred every other grace and virtue. It comes out in various forms: in acts of forgiveness, forbearance, compassion, and kindness one to another. Let us then, above all things, and at any cost, keep ourselves in this love; for we have as much of true religion as we have of the love of God, and no more.

(2.) Keep yourselves in the love of God, because it

produces *cheerful obedience to the will of God*. The love of God is not a light transient sentiment, but an abiding principle, ever working in the inmost recesses, and through all the avenues of our moral and spiritual being. It is a power within and the main spring of action without.

“ Love is the fountain whence
 All true obedience flows ;
 The Christian serves the God he loves,
 And loves the God he knows.”

“ This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments ; and His commandments are not grievous.” “ He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” “ He that loveth Me keepeth My sayings.” Obedience is love itself made visible—love in action. It is the voice, and look, and carriage which affection of necessity assumes. Who does not smile at professions of friendship which evaporate in empty words? Who does not know instinctively that it is the nature of a strong affection to take possession of the man, and be visible in the general tenor of his actions? Would any one think it necessary to believe in the most solemn asseverations of attachment which lead to no practical consequences? God has established exactly the same test of our devotion to Him which we habitually apply towards each other. He judges of our love to Him not by any mere verbal expressions, not by occasional ebullition of feelings, but by conformity to His will. Whenever the heart is warmed with the love of God, there will be a willing service rendered to God. Let us keep ourselves in the love of God as the blessed incentive to obedience ; the more we love God the more cheerfully shall we trust, honour, and obey Him. Declensions in obedience begin in declining love ; and when we leave our first love we neglect to do our first works.

(3.) Keep yourselves in the love of God, because it *will constrain you to love the children of God*. “ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love

God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." The fire of love to God cannot burn in a heart cold and frozen to the saints; our love to God and the godly, grow or decay together. Living and abiding in the love of God we shall live and abide in love to our fellow-disciples. We shall not pause to inquire to what section of the Church they belong, what name they bear, what colour of uniform they wear; but, recognizing in them the spirit of Christ's disciples, our heart will warm toward them, and our hand will be freely offered to them. What force, as well as beauty, there is in St. John's reasoning on this subject, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

(4.) "Keep yourselves in the love of God," as it is the *great preservative from the errors and evils which throng your path*. Love imparts light to the mind; the more we love God, the more clearly shall we know God, and the meaning of His word. What says the great Teacher? "If you continue in My word (or love), then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free." One of the blessed results of continuing in Christ's love is a capacity to know the truth. We shall know the truth spiritually—because that is its true meaning—effectually, savingly. It is thus the Apostle represents the enlightening influence of this love in his prayer for the Philippians: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent," or that ye may test the difference of things, the good and the bad, the true and the false, to avoid the one and choose the other.

Love to God, my reader, is your only safeguard against all manner of false doctrine and evil practices. Lose the

fervour of this love, and there is no telling the notions you may adopt, or the course you may pursue. As, therefore, you dread apostacy, keep yourself in the love of God.

(5.) Keep yourselves in the love of God, for in doing so you will *preserve order and harmony within*. When the love of God is in the ascendant, it sets all the powers of the soul in motion; it gives impulse and energy to the will, discernment to the understanding, and brings into harmony and peace all the discordant elements of our nature. Happy indeed is the soul where this Divine love reigns. Moreover, keeping in this love you will preserve peace and unity among yourselves as members of the Church. Love unites, and union in the Church is what we earnestly desire to witness. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Love is the basis of Christian union and fellowship.

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

Above all, keeping in the love of God, we shall feel drawn to Him as the centre of attraction. Converse with Him will be our element. All our purposes and pursuits will be in harmony with His will, and all that we do will be done to His glory. Loving God we can sweetly acquiesce in all His dispensations toward us, whether they be good or evil. We can bear almost anything from one we love, especially when we know that it is accompanied with wisdom and directed by goodness. It was love that dictated those memorable sayings of Job, during the early part of his trials. "The Lord gave, and He hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?"

(6.) One more reason. "Keep yourselves in the love of God," that you may be *esteemed* and *loved* of God. For there is a sense in which God's love to us is the result of our love to Him. "I love them that love Me." Who would not desire to be loved of God? If it is a privilege to

have the esteem and love of good and wise men, it is infinitely greater to enjoy the holy complacency of God. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance doth behold the upright." "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him." What He said of His beloved Son, He says of every Christian, "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him." "The Lord preserveth all them that love Him." "Be merciful unto me," said David, "as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy name." What can exceed the sweetness and suitableness of our Lord's assurance. "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love Him and manifest myself unto Him, and we will come to Him and make our abode with Him." If we keep in the love of God, and do the things that please Him, we shall be loved of God, esteemed of God, and approved of God. "The best of men," says one, "shall have the best of love."

We have now assigned reasons why we should keep ourselves in the love of God. For the same reasons we should *grow* in it. Let us pray that our love may abound yet more and more, and that we may be "rooted and grounded in love," and that the "Lord may direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." Let us not linger upon the margin of this sea of love, but enter into its depth and dwell in it. "For he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

In the biography of the late Edward Bickersteth, of London, the following touching incident is recorded: "During his illness," says the biographer, "he derived much consolation from the word and promises of God. When one of his children brought him some refreshment, he said, 'I will give you a cup of living water for this cup of tea; it is this—I have been thinking about it a long time—' Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." These may be pleasant rooms to dwell in (mentioning some of the rooms of the house); but the best room of all to keep in is the love

of God, and what a prospect we have from it, "looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The last words of Richard Cromwell to those who stood around him were these—may they be mine—"Live in love, I am going to the God of love. Keep in God's precious love; live, breathe, and act in it, and all will be well in life, death, and eternity."

Let us briefly notice *a few directions as to the means of preserving our love to God.* Keep yourselves in the love of God. It is as true that we are to keep ourselves, as that we are kept by the power of God. The precept is as Divine as the promise. We *can* by the exercise of the grace given *do* what is here enjoined. We know the love of God is produced in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and it is for us, in humble dependence upon His assistance, to cultivate diligently those means by which it may be cherished and increased. What then are the means to secure this important end? We answer—

(1.) We must *avoid those things which are inconsistent with the love of God.* It has been frequently and truly observed that love is a tender plant, requiring to be both guarded and watered diligently. It will not thrive among the weeds of worldly cares and fleshly lusts. We are warned not to love the world. We must keep ourselves *out* of love with the world, if we are to keep *in* the love of God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We must not live in the indulgence of any sin, any secret sin is inconsistent with the love of God. Let us watch and pray, when pursuing our daily employment, that the damp and chilling influence of the world may be warded off, and the fire of love kept constantly alive within.

(2.) But it is not merely by avoiding those things which are inconsistent with the love of God that we shall promote it. We must attend to those that cherish it. We must continue to feed on the Word of God, as the aliment of spiritual life. Let us seek to become more and more acquainted with what God has revealed in His precious

Word, that our love to God may be preserved and maintained unto the end. Let the reading of the Scriptures be accompanied with prayer for the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and to instruct us in the things of God. These are means adapted to the end proposed; they are to love what oil is to the fire, tending to feed and to enliven it.

(3.) We must persevere in obedience to the *will* of God. The Saviour enjoins this as the means of preserving this love. He also sets before us His own obedience and love. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you"—Amazing truth!—"Continue ye in My love." How is this to be done? "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Oh, that we as obedient children may practically obey and do the Father's will, and then we shall know what it is to keep in His love.

(4.) Finally there must be *frequent meditation* on the love of God, revealed to us in Christ Jesus. "We have known," said John, "and believed the love that God hath to us." And blessed be God, we can say that we know from the testimony given, the love God hath to us; and believing the testimony we receive it into our hearts, and know it, experience it in the way of enjoyment. To keep, therefore, in this love, we must continue in the knowledge and faith of God's love to us. We have believed, but God is saying to us, "Continue to believe in My love to you. I have put My Son upon the cross to show My love, could I do more? We see the love of God, as we look on Jesus lifted up on the cross. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Faith in the love of God in Christ begets in us love to Him in return. It may be said that we abide in the love of God when we receive it, and reciprocate it. Oh, believers, seek to be established in the faith of God's love, that you may in these days of lukewarmness keep yourselves in the love of God.

EXPOSITION X.

Looking expectantly for mercy and eternal life.—VER. 21 :

“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

JUDE in this final direction seems to take it as granted that those who keep themselves in the love of God will be looking with hope and joy for the coming of the Lord. Let us ask ourselves, how is it with us? Are we looking? Is this our turn and frame of mind? Looking is an exercise of faith, an act of obedience, an outgoing of love to Him for whom we look. He that is not looking, that is careless and indifferent to His coming, lacks an essential feature of the Christian character. The first Christians were taught to be looking for the Saviour *from* heaven. Let us then learn *what* we are to look for—mercy and eternal life.

(1.) *The mercy we are taught to look for is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now we understand this mercy to be mercy personally exercised by the Lord Jesus; He to whom the Father hath committed all things in the government of the world, and in communications with the Church. We look to Him personally to receive mercy at His hands. It is not pardoning mercy, that we have obtained from God through the atoning death of Christ; it is not accepting mercy, that we have received; it is not sustaining mercy, that we daily experience; but it is *rewarding, crowning* mercy—the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will come again to reward His people, not according to their merit, but according to the riches of His mercy and grace. We never can deserve His mercy. We can never lay the Saviour under obligation. The rewards of the day of the Lord, though expressive of righteousness and faithfulness, have

their origin in mercy. The crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give in that day to those who love His appearing, will not be a reward of debt, but of grace. But for grace we should have no good deeds to be rewarded; but being accepted in Christ, what is done in His name will be rewarded for His sake. The cup of cold water, the mite, the box of spikenard, the least service done to the least of His little ones will be crowned with a rich reward as having been done to Him. This is the mercy of the Lord, and the mercy the best of men will need in that day. In this way the Apostle Paul looked at the matter, for in recounting the kind acts of a friend towards him, prays not that the Lord may reward him according to his good works, but that he may find mercy at His coming. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; but when in Rome he sought me out very diligently and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."

Oh, may we find the mercy of our Lord Jesus in that day! We have no claim to it. We are totally undeserving of it. We cannot merit it by our doing or suffering. We are unprofitable servants. Nevertheless, we look forward with confidence to the time when we shall receive from the Lord Jesus, the precious gifts of His grace—the rewards of His mercy. We are now heirs of this glorifying mercy; by and by we shall be in full possession of it.

"Mercy's full power we then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

(2.) The mercy we are taught to look for is mercy unto eternal life. Eternal life is something already in possession. "He that receiveth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." But though this most precious gift is spoken of as a present possession, it is referred to as a future hope. "This is the promise

that He hath promised us, even eternal life." "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life." In these passages, eternal life is put as a promise, a hope, an inheritance. It is a purchased as well as a communicated life. It is the fruit of redemption as well as the free gift of love. It is the crown and climax of our hope. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." But what is this life? Who can fully comprehend the prize? Eternal life! It is something more than freedom from the evils of this world, and the miseries of that which is to come. It is something more than the mere consciousness of existence; it is a life of holiness, and honour, and happiness; a life that embraces the blissful immortality of both soul and body—the perfect uninterrupted happiness of *the whole man*. This is held out to us as our hope. We look for Christ who is our life, when He comes He will be the life of our whole nature, body, soul and spirit. As He lives we shall live. It will be eternal life in the heaven of God's unveiled presence; and into that heavenly sphere we shall enter, to go out no more for ever. Eternal life will be mercy's bud expanded into the undying flower. Eternal life will be mercy in her plenitude; mercy without measure and without end.

Oh, brethren beloved, let us during the little season we are down here, be patiently and lovingly "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." "The words of Jude," said Mr. Fuller, when dying, "supply me with the aptest illustration of my frame of mind, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ought not this to be our frame of mind in life? "Waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus." "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." What a blessed state of mind to be in.

"Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." Looking! like men looking out anxiously toward

the east for the first dawn of some long-wished-for day. Like men climbing the lofty mountain to get the first sight of the rising sun on some festal morning. Looking for the glad return of the Lord. Looking for our gathering together unto Him. Looking for the mercy which will end in the better life. This looking will nerve us with fresh energy for service, and lift the heart up out of its cares and discouragements. It will tend to elevate us above all that is sordid, selfish, and worldly. It will purify and make us meet to dwell in the light of His presence in the grand future. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost ; keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

EXPOSITION XI.

The special duties which are required of us in reference to Apostates.

“And of some have compassion, making a difference. Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.”—Vers. 22, 23.

IN the former pregnant passages which engaged our thoughts, Jude enforces upon us the exhortation to establish ourselves in the faith, to live in the spirit of prayer, to keep in the enjoyment of God’s love, and to be looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. This is blessed work for us to do, but it is not all that is enjoined. Our responsibility does not end with “building,” “praying,” “keeping,” “looking.” There are duties which we owe to others as well as to ourselves. Were these duties to be passed over unnoticed, our exposition of this Epistle would be wanting in faithfulness and consistency. Abiding in the love of God, we shall be secretly and instinctively impelled to care for those who are not in the faith. Jude would have us cast a loving look, and stretch out a helping hand to them. “Of some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.”

These words set forth our duty in relation to apostates. It is to seek, in various ways, to rescue them from error, and sin, and misery. The two principal thoughts here suggested are these:—

- I. *That among apostates are some whose condition may well excite and elicit our compassion.*
- II. *Others are as brands in the fire whom we should seek to rescue with fear and earnest effort.*

I. *That among apostates are some whose condition may well excite and elicit our compassion.* "Of some have compassion." The feeling to be manifested by us to apostates is expressed in one word—compassion. This feeling of compassion is akin to pity; it includes pity, and something more. Compassion is pity in action; it moves us to help the helpless, and to relieve the needy. So it is said, that "Jesus moved with compassion, put forth his hand, touched the leper, and healed him." To the man out of whom was cast the legion of devils, Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Again, we read that when the Lord "saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." They were neglected and ignorant, and He began to teach them many things; they were ready to faint with hunger, and He fed them; they were sick, and He healed them.

Such was the compassion of Jesus, and such is the compassion which we are to feel to our fellow men. Have we the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Are our hearts stirred with feelings of compassion as we look upon the many that are out of the way, and on the high road to ruin? "Of some," says Jude, "have compassion." It may be asked who are the *some* whom the Apostle deems to be objects of compassion? They are such as have made shipwreck of faith, such as have erred concerning the truth, and have separated themselves from Christian fellowship, and drifted into the region of doubt and the mire of sin. There are many of this unhappy class of persons to be found in Christendom. Some of them we can never know, and can never hope to reach by our compassion. But there are some we do know; they are easy to find, they are within the sphere in which we daily move, within the circle of our acquaintance, within the circle of our relations, within the circle of our household. They once knew the Lord, and have fallen from grace. These are the objects of pity. Do

we feel tenderly concerned for them? Do we look with compassion upon them? Do we plead and pray for them? There were persons of this class in Paul's time that he could not think of without tears. "Many walk of whom I have told you oft, and now tell you with weeping." If we are alive to their apostate condition, we shall feel for them, and at times experience much distress, fervent compassion, and an agonizing desire for their restoration to the paths of righteousness and peace. We shall be ready when opportunity arises to warn them faithfully of the endless hell of fire into which they will sink if they continue to drift away from Christ, and to entreat them to retrace their steps in words that breathe of mercy. Oh, if we as believers had more of this compassion, our power for usefulness would be increased a hundredfold.

This compassion is *discriminating* in its exercise. "Making a difference." There is a difference in the character of apostates, and wisdom is needed in the treatment of each. It would be unwise and injurious to deal with all after the same fashion, or to think one way as good as another. We must take pains to mark differences of character. Some are hardened and confirmed in their evil ways; they go on in sin and error, without remorse. It is difficult to know how to treat them. Warn them, and they conceive we are knocking at the wrong door. Pity them, and they will tell us to spare our pity for those who need it. Offer them the light of Divine truth, and they discern it not, and will tell us that they prefer to "walk in the light of their own fire." They are proud, self-conceited, confident in delusion, and seem to be given up to hopeless apostacy. We cannot in the strict meaning of the word compassionate them. All efforts to save them are futile. The Holy Spirit says in effect, "Let them alone." Their doom is settled. Some apostates are diffident and anxious; they see their folly in departing from the Lord, and in moments of calm reflection, lament it; they are open to conviction, and by kind words and a gentle spirit may be persuaded to return.

Some have been misled—seduced from the truth by false teaching, and are unsettled. On them we should look with compassion, and seek in the spirit of love to convert them from the error of their ways (Gal. vi. 1). Some are in a state of indifference, careless and unthinking, and need to be aroused and admonished. May God give us the spiritual discernment needed, that we may know to whom to speak, when, where, and how.

II. *There are others as brands in the fire, whom we are to rescue with fear and earnest effort.* “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.” Note—

(1.) *Their perilous condition.* They are represented as being in the fire. What sort of fire? The fire of sin, that, indeed, is the element in which they live. Think for a moment of the multitudes around us that are in this fire; although they have no idea of the terrible condition they are in. They realise it not. They do not, and will not see what sin is, and what it is doing. They have no anxiety, or alarm, no apprehension of the moral ruin sin is stealthily working; no presentiment of the doom that awaits them. They flatter themselves that their security is guaranteed against the fire of sin, being insured in the office of respectability of life. But in truth they are living in the fire of corrupt desires and ungodly lusts. Is it not affecting to see so many of the sons and daughters of fashion, light-hearted and buoyant, merry and gay in the fire of youthful lusts, “sporting themselves with their own deceivings?” Is it not sad to think of men of science, of intelligence, and respectability, who feel more or less the effects of sin, yet make light of it, and close their ears to the warnings given of their danger? We are amazed as we witness men immersed in business, pursuing earthly gain, and living as if they had no eternity to prepare for, and no danger to alarm them. On every hand, we behold the sons of toil, thoughtless about their salvation, the prey of sin, inflamed and stupefied by strong drink; and though they bitterly

feel the ravages and ill-effects of sin, yet, like the moth, seek the flame again, till they are scorched, stunned, and helpless. What saith Isaiah? "Wickedness burneth like fire" (ix. 18). As fire has in it the property to burn and destroy that on which it acts, so sin has in it the power to pain and scorch and ruin spirit, soul, and body. It is man's direst foe. It undermines all his hopes, burns up all his higher aspirations, deadens his moral sensibilities, sears his conscience, paralyzes the energies of his will; and if this fire is not arrested, put out, quenched by the water of life, through the blood of the Lamb, it requires no prophetic spirit to declare what the end will be.

We know, and it is a solemn thought, that *all* who are living in the fire of sin are liable every moment to *the fire of Divine justice*. The wrath of an infinitely just and holy God against the rejectors of His mercy is terrible to contemplate. It is compared to fire. It is the natural expression of His hatred to sin. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The fire of God's wrath has been felt at times in this life. It was poured upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness. It consumed the company of Korah in the wilderness for their rebellion. It fell as with a lightning flash upon the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, for one act of disobedience. These are facts of history, and they may be multiplied almost without number, which reveal the fire of God's wrath against man's ungodliness. But, oh, the wrath to come! Soon, very soon the Lord will come, and make known His indignation toward His enemies (Isa. lxvi. 14-16). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power." In that day the Lord Jesus will avenge Himself upon those who would not that He

should reign over them, and will say to them, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Hell will be their everlasting dwelling-place, where they will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire in company with the most wretched associates. It is a fearful thing to fall under the heavy wrath of a sin-avenging God. Oh! that men would *hear* and fear, and turn to the Lord.

This brings us to notice—

(2.) *Our work.* It is to save them from the fire. How are we to do this? "Save them," says Jude, "with fear." This fear, be it observed, is not the fear of man which bringeth a snare; it is not the fear of the slave unprotected from the licentious power of his master; it is not the fear which arises from sin and guilt. It is the fear of the Lord, a principle wrought in the soul by the Eternal Spirit. It is filial and reverential in its nature, and is associated with love and obedience. It must needs be influential. Noah in an eminent degree exhibited its influence. He steadfastly believed what God said of a coming deluge, and, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his family. Moses in Egypt forewarned Pharaoh, that the Lord on the morrow would send a violent storm of hail and fire, and that every man and beast in the field, unsheltered, should be destroyed. He that *feared* the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses (Exod. ix. 18-25). They were saved with fear. This fear then is the fruit of faith, and an incentive to action. We firmly believe that the warnings of God's word are true, that the vials of His wrath will be poured out upon the wicked for their iniquities, and therefore we fear. "My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy righteous judgments" (Psa. cxix. 120). Faith sees the day of wrath at hand, and moves us with fear to warn sinners of their impending danger. Moved by this fear we cannot hold our peace, we cannot let them alone in their false notions and dreamy delusions; we must try and strive to startle them into the terrible and terrifying discovery that

sin has ruined them, and then tell them that the only way of salvation is by Jesus Christ ; and that if they continue to despise His warnings, reject His overtures of mercy, and resist the gracious strivings of the Holy Spirit, they will be finally lost, and that eternity will bring no hope of mercy. Living under the influence of this fear we shall anxiously yearn to save them, and to cry with trembling emotion, "Awake ! awake ! Arise, lest ye be consumed." Many holy men have employed language to frighten men out of their sins, and have been instruments by this method of *saving some*.

(3.) *This fear in its operation will produce earnestness in the work of pulling them out of the fire.* The nature and magnitude of the work demands it. There must, we repeat, be earnestness, haste, courage, bravery, and even a willingness to hazard our own life in this enterprise. We could give many touching illustrations of men who have risked their own life in their efforts to rescue others from temporal death. And ought we not to feel a more intense concern, and put forth a mightier energy to save our fellow-men from the wretchedness and misery of sin here and hereafter. We cannot excuse our complacent inactivity by saying that God *alone* can save them. He is pleased to use us as instruments and agents for the salvation of souls ; and if He in His infinite mercy has rescued us from the fire, surely we shall be constrained by grateful love to throw our whole soul into the work. We sometimes sing,

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave ;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.
Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save."

But what are we doing to save them? We are in the midst of spiritual wretchedness. Many of our near neighbours are in the fire ; are they to perish unpitied and without sympathy from us? Shall we be so cruel as to be unconcerned whether they are saved or lost? We cannot,

if we have a spark of Divine love in our hearts. Nor can we conceive how any Christian can be satisfied to shirk his responsibility for the souls of others. To every Christian there is the message of God: "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" (Prov. xxiv. 11, 12). Let no one indulge the thought for a moment, that because he is not an evangelist, teacher, or leader in the Church, but only a private member, he is under no obligation to engage in this labour of love. Would it be right to pass a house on fire without giving warning, even though one were not a member of the Fire Brigade? Should we not seek to save a drowning man, even though we could not command the patent lifeboat? Whatever may be our Church position, we are responsible to do what we can in our sphere and station to pluck men out of the fire. What is needed in every Christian for this work is a deep and earnest longing after souls, a keen sense of their danger, and a desire to save them.

We do not hesitate to affirm that *unbelief* underlies this apathy in reference to the spiritual condition of the masses around us. If we believed in a coming judgment, in the doom of the ungodly, in the dread realities of eternity, in the lake of fire, and in the worm that dieth not, we should arouse ourselves to do all in our power, by prayer, reasoning, reproof, and self-denying efforts to save them. "Knowing," said St. Paul, "the terror of the Lord we persuade men." The heart of the apostle was bent on the salvation of Jew and Gentile. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means *save some*" (1 Cor. ix. 19, 22). "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let

him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." "Of some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

Brethren, believe me, there are to be found those around us, who with outstretched arms are pleading for help! They are in the scorching fire of sin, and are groaning to be delivered; they are longing for some kind hand to snatch them from thence. Shall we stand aloof? Some are lingering on the plains of Sodom; oh, let us lay hold of them, and with a friendly violence bring them forth. May God put into our hearts this love for souls, and grant unto us the joy and honour of pulling them out of the fire!

We observe, in conclusion, that while we pity the fallen, and help to lift them out of the misery of sin, *we must take great care to preserve our own purity, "hating even the garments spotted by the flesh,"* lest by the touch of it we become polluted. We must learn to distinguish between the sinner and his sins. We are allowed to hate the work of them that turn aside, but we are not to hate their persons (Psa. ci. 3). In the life of Christ we see large charity for great sinners, but no charity for sin; much compassion, combined with infinite separation from sin. It is a mistake to suppose that in order to pluck others from the fire we must go into the fire ourselves. This will never do. The garment spotted by the flesh must be inwardly hated, loathed, and outwardly shunned. Freedom from sin, purity of life, are essential to success in saving others. The best way to rescue a man from an evil position is to be thoroughly free ourselves. How can I best pull a man out of a morass? Surely not by going into the morass, but by standing on firm ground, and from thence lending him a helping hand. I cannot pull a man out of anything unless I am out myself. If we tamper with sin, tolerate error, and cultivate friendship with the men of the world in the hope of saving them, we shall be in danger of being contami-

nated ourselves. We must be thoroughly and decidedly separate from the world, consistent and holy in life, and have our hearts brimful and overflowing with love to the perishing, if we are to be successful in the godlike employment of saving them.

EXPOSITION XII.

The Closing Doxology.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”—Vers. 24, 25.

WE have been occupied in tracing the principles and practices of apostacy brought out in this Epistle. We are sensible, without any false modesty, that the outline which we have given is rough and imperfect; but if what we have written tends to awaken the reader to a sense of the subtle evils which are at work in the churches, and leads him to avail himself of the warnings against them, then what we have written will prove, we trust, practically useful.

The Apostle closes this brief but weighty and solemn Epistle with a doxology, which evidently grows out of it and completes and adorns it. This doxology is full of comfort to us, inasmuch as there is praise rendered to One who is able to keep us in the midst of all the dark and terrible forms of apostacy that surround us, and it is to His holy keeping we are committed. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.” Let us consider—

I. What it is, that God our Saviour is able to do for us here and hereafter.

II. The doxology directed to God our Saviour now and hereafter.

I. What it is, that God our Saviour is able to do for us here and hereafter. “He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory

with exceeding joy." These words express the confidence of Jude in the Divine ability of our Saviour to keep us, and they should inspire us with the same confidence.

He is *able* to keep us from falling. To fall is to stumble into sin and error. We are liable to stumble, and we know from experience that if we are not vigilant and watchful, we shall slip and stumble in our Christian course. The warnings given us in this Epistle are sufficient to impress us with our danger. We are reminded of angels falling, Israel falling, cities falling, famous men falling into contention—Balaam falling into the sin of covetousness, and perishing. These are beacons to warn us. We are not free from danger. Many in this day have stumbled, and are stumbling through men who handle the Word of God deceitfully. Errors abound. Snares of one kind or another are laid for our feet. They are to be met with in trade, in pleasure, in prosperity, in the church, in the world; and unless we continually take heed to our steps, we shall stumble into temptation and sin. There is no necessity, however, for us to stumble. We may be kept. While alive to our weakness and danger, it is our joy to know that there is One who is able to keep us from falling.

(1.) *The Lord Jesus is able in the exercise of His power to keep us from falling.* We can have no doubt of this, if we regard the power exercised over us and over our tempters as Divine. Our Lord through His obedience unto death, proved Himself to be worthy to be entrusted with the power of God. He could say, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." The power exercised by Jesus Christ is delegated power; He will exercise it in His Father's name, and for His Father's glory. He will magnify His power in keeping us in the midst of danger and temptation. What lively faith the apostles expressed in the ability of Christ to save His people. "He is able to make all grace to abound toward you" (2 Cor. ix. 8). "He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). "He is able to save to

the uttermost" (Heb. vii. 25), that is, from the beginning of conversion to the crowning of glory. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20). "He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him" (2 Tim. i. 12). What lively conceptions these passages give us of the all-sufficiency of Christ. We believe that He is able in the exercise of His power to keep us from falling *now*, and always, in all the circumstances of this life. We have confidence, that we shall be holden up, for God is able to make us stand." He will magnify His grace and power in our weakness, while the wise and strong in their own strength and wisdom stumble and fall. He will keep us from falling, and give us ability to stand against all the wiles and temptations of the devil. "Keep me, and I shall be kept; hold me up, and I shall be safe."

(2.) *The Lord Jesus is able to keep us because of the wisdom with which He is endowed.* He is the only wise God, not merely wise, but the only wise God, and knows what means to employ for our preservation. We love to think of the infinite intelligence of Jesus. He knows every snare which is laid for the feet of His people, every device of Satan against them, everything that can happen—all is plain to Him: there is nothing that can possibly be hidden from His eye. His eye never slumbers. He knows all the dangers that beset our path through this world; another thing, he knows our own evil tendencies through which we might be induced to fall and go out of the way. And as Christ knows all about us, our dangers, trials, and tendencies, He knows what means to use to defend, uphold, and save us. In our perplexity, when not knowing which way to turn, it is well to remember that God our Saviour is the only *One* capable of keeping us; we have neither wisdom to guide, nor strength to keep ourselves; but He has both power and wisdom, and is ready to exercise both in guiding and guarding us through the deceitful and perplexing path of life.

Oh, beloved, if God our Saviour is all wise to see our dangers, and all powerful to carry us through them, let us quietly commit ourselves to His keeping. Have we not had proofs in the past of His power to keep and of His wisdom in keeping? He who has kept us in the past will not fail us in the future. He is faithful, and will keep us by His Spirit and by His word from evil. But to realise this Divine keeping, there must be faith on our part. We "are kept by the power of God *through faith*." God does not keep us as we would guard a treasure that is unconscious of our care. We realise His watchful, loving care over us as the result of our trust in Him, and not independent of it. Let us trust Him moment by moment to keep us for Himself, that He may fulfil in us the good pleasure of His will and the work of faith with power.

(3.) The Lord Jesus is able not only to keep us from falling, *but to fit and prepare us for His glorious presence hereafter*. He is "able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." How wonderful to know that He is able to do this—able to keep us faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness, to keep us free from contamination in the midst of corruption, to sanctify us wholly, spirit, soul, and body; and to keep us holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. i. 4). How blessed to know that our Saviour is able to purify us *now*, and to glorify us *then*—to make us like Himself here, and to take us to Himself, to His own presence and company hereafter. This is the purpose of His grace concerning us, and He is able to accomplish it.

He *intends*, blessed be His name, to present us, even us, faultless before the presence of His glory. "Faultless!" not in the eye of men and angels only, but in the all-seeing eye of the Lord Himself. He will see in us no sin to be judged, that has been put away for ever; no folly left for Him to find fault with; no charge to be brought against us. We shall be without fault before the throne of God (Rev. xiv. 5). This is the ultimate design of His grace, and it is for

this, Christian reader, that we who were sometime alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, *to present us holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in His sight* (Col. i. 21, 22).

This act of presentation will be His own. He will present us to Himself in the day of His glory. This is the animating prospect brought before us. He says to those espoused to Him, "I will come again," in fulfilment of My promise "to take you to Myself." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." We shall stand in the presence of His glory, and be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is ; the light of His face will beam upon us, and we shall be glorious in His glory.

It is added that Christ will do this "with exceeding joy." He will rejoice in us and over us, and present us to Himself with much joy, exultation, and triumph. This is the joy set before Him when He endured the cross, despising the shame ; this is the reward for the travail of His soul ; this is the satisfaction anticipated. He has an interest in us which no one else can have, He loves us as no other can love us, and He will rejoice when we are brought into the presence of His glory as none but He can.

II. The doxology directed to God our Saviour both here and hereafter. "Now unto Him . . . the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both *now* and ever, Amen." It becomes us to give to Jesus the credit, the honour, the praise of being able to keep us from falling, to purify us from sin and pollution, and to glorify us in His presence in the day of His appearing. Praise is the natural expression of grateful, joyous feelings. Praise is not forced. It is spontaneous and intelligent. Those who know the Lord and have been "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," and shared His grace, cannot keep silent. A conviction of duty forbids it. A sense of obligation forbids it. A regard

for their own interest forbids. The soul filled with admiration of the power and grace of God must find vent in praise.

When are we to begin to sing this doxology? The voice of Jude says, *now*. We are not to withhold the gratitude of our hearts and the praise of our lips till our dangers are past, and our deliverances complete. Surely not. We must give glory to Christ now, that is, all our life long. "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." However He deal with me, He is worthy of my confidence and love. It was the disposition and habit of the apostles to celebrate the glory of God their Saviour. They could not sound the note too high, or praise Him too much. In the doxologies interwoven in their epistles we find the highest tribute of praise and glory given to Christ Jesus in conjunction with God the Father, teaching us that Jesus as a Divine person is justly entitled to the same supreme homage and worship as is offered to the Father. There can be no doubt that Paul and Peter, Jude and John, were wont to offer their highest tribute of praise and adoration to Jesus, their glorified Lord.

It may be interesting to refer to a few of the many doxologies which they rendered heart and soul to God our Saviour. St. Paul in opening his Epistle to the Galatians, refers to the work of Christ on the cross, that He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, and closes this statement of doctrine with the doxology. "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." The same apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians, prays most fervently that they may be rooted and grounded in Christ, and filled with His Spirit, and then lifts his spirit up in praise and adoration to the Lord: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, through all ages world without end. Amen" (Eph. iii. 20, 21). In writing to the Philippians, Paul expresses his confidence in

the resources of God to meet their spiritual needs. "But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen." In the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is an ascription of glory to Jesus, the once crucified, but now exalted Shepherd of the sheep, "To whom," says the apostle, in loving adoration, "be glory for ever and ever. Amen." The apostle, in writing to Timothy, speaks in the most affecting terms of the riches of Divine grace towards himself as the chief of sinners; and as he reviews the stupendous mercy that made him a minister of the Gospel he once sought to destroy, he gives vent to his grateful feelings in the sublime doxology: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. i. 17). At a later period words of confidence flow from the lips of "Paul the aged." "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim. iv. 18). The Spirit in the apostle ascribes to Jesus, the blessed and only Potentate, "honour and power everlasting." The Apostle Peter was wont to offer his adorations to Jesus. The prayer for believers is accompanied with a doxology (see 1 Peter v. 10, 11). The exhortation in his second Epistle to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is followed with the words, "To Him be glory, both now and for ever." We come now to Jude's magnificent doxology: "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." The more this inspired ascription of praise to God our Saviour is examined, the more it is calculated to excite our reverence and admiration. It is a four-fold ascription of praise; each word is full of meaning and noteworthy.

(1.) *Glory is ascribed to Him.* "Unto Him be glory." All that love Him will agree to give Him glory now, and glory for ever. We cannot add to His glory, but we can

speak of it, we can glorify Him in our actions and praise Him by our lips. This He claims of us, and assures us that He is glorified thereby. "Who offereth praise glorifieth Me." We are constantly called upon to exalt the Lord, to bless and to magnify Him. "Give unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, give unto the Lord the praise due to His name. Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due to His name" (Psa. xxix. 1, 2). This ascription of glory to Him excludes SELF. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name, give glory. Thine, O Lord, is the glory.

(2.) *Majesty is ascribed to Him.* The apostles were "eye-witnesses of His majesty." We see Him by faith seated on the right hand of God. The sight fills us with delight. Honour and majesty are laid upon Him. Glory and majesty are His, and in that glory and majesty He will appear at His second coming. It will be manifest then that He is the only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. To Him all the redeemed will ascribe kingly beauty and excellence. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty . . . Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head over all" (1 Chron. xxix. 11).

(3.) *Dominion is ascribed to Him.* It rightly belongs to Him, that is unbounded dominion over all creation. Dominion over death. Dominion over the devil. Dominion over His enemies. Dominion over His people. Dominion over angels, principalities, and powers. His dominion is universal and everlasting. "The Father hath put all things under His feet." He is head and Lord over all. He rules and governs all. Men may doubt and deny His Lordship, but we can say with Jude, Unto Him be dominion for ever. The hour is coming when His sovereignty as God-man will be universally acknowledged among men.

(4.) *Power is ascribed to Him.* It is our joy to know

that the Lord Jesus, our God and Saviour, is in possession of unlimited power. Power to command angels and to control devils. Power to subdue His enemies and make them His footstool. Power to do what He has said—to execute His threatenings and to fulfil His promises. Power to give strength to them that have no might; power to establish His people; power to make them perfect in every good work; power to keep His people for the inheritance He has destined for them. He is, therefore, worthy of our confidence and of our praise. Who is worthy, if He is not? And on whom shall Divine honours be bestowed if not on Him? There is none like Him, none so worthy to receive glory and majesty, dominion and power.

Jesus is worthy to receive,
Honour and power divine;
And blessings more than we can give,
Be, Lord, for ever Thine.

The perpetuity of this anthem of praise is clearly indicated in the words, "*both now and ever.*" This is no passing doxology to be sung on earth and then die away and be forgotten. No, no. It begins on earth, and will be continued with deeper intelligence in heaven. We know not what further displays of glory will be made in the future. This we do know, that the glory, majesty, dominion, and power of the Lord Jesus will continue, and that the redeemed of mankind will never cease their loving adorations. As they gaze upon Him they will be moved by new and intense devotion "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6). The elders and saints in heaven owe their bliss and places of honour to the Lamb. "Thou wast slain, and hath redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10). The hosts of angels round about the throne, filled with adoring wonder will join the anthem of the saints: "Worthy is the

Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever" (Rev. v. 12, 13).

Never shall this glory and majesty, dominion and power cease to belong to the person of Him who is at once the Son of Man and the Son of God; never shall His praise cease to be sung by all earth and heaven, by men and angels. "His name shall endure for ever; His name shall continue as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed."

To this doxology is added the word *amen*, as a sanction and confirmation of it. To whom could such a doxology belong but to one who is Divine. With our whole heart we echo the *amen*; so let it be. It is our desire—earnest supreme desire—that Jesus in the glory of His Father may not be robbed by us of His due. Here Divine honour is rendered to Him. Is there any who doubt that this ascription of praise is due to the person of the Son of God, let them not say *amen*, but let those who know what it is to be saved, for ever say, *Amen* and *amen*.

THE END.

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